

THE SMART SET

*Its Prime Purpose is to Provide Lively Entertainment
For Minds That Are Not Primitive*

THE MEDDLERS

By William Richard Hereford

AS Yves-Bertrand, Vicomte de Volney, walked blithely through the flowering, fragrant gardens of the Luxembourg on that sparkling May morning, the little birds were singing in his heart. Swinging through the park with his long stride, he made a brave figure in his riding breeches and tight riding coat; a pleasing picture to look upon, for Bertrand de Volney was a handsome, stalwart, dashing fellow, with eyes clear and brown as a polished hazelnut.

Truly those he passed, workmen in blue blouses late to their daily task, artists with paint boxes and canvases under their arms on their way to a favored corner overlooking the sunken garden, models hastening to an early appointment in some nearby studio, nursemaids with gay bonnets watching none too closely romping, laughing little children as bright as the sunshine in which they played—any of these whom you may see on a summer morning in the Luxembourg might have heard the song in Bertrand de Volney's heart or they might have seen that it was there, for eyes and lips must dance when the heart sings.

Two models who passed him looked up into his face and, smiling, whispered to each other. "Ah, *voilà*! One who

has the music in his soul on this fine morning! Didst thou see the smile upon his lips and the *muguet* in his buttonhole? Lucky is the woman who can bring that look into a man's face!"

There is a time in the existence of every young girl when the Book of Life is interesting only when the page tells of love, and these two were arrived at that delightful hour. They turned and stood gazing at De Volney as he walked on.

"Ah!" sighed one of them. "Without a doubt he goes to the home of his beloved, for his steps are eager."

"No," answered the other. "Did I not tell thee to regard the May flower in his coat? The *muguet*, as thou knowest, must be bestowed by the hand of love that it may work its greatest happiness. He comes now directly from her who gave it to him, and that is why the music is in his heart."

"Yes, thou art right, Margot; and I should not mind being the one who pinned the *muguet* on his breast. Thou canst well believe that she is happy."

But the Vicomte Bertrand de Volney was not in love. The simple suggestion would have made him laugh. True, he was good-looking, he was rich and he was thirty-five, and the spray of *muguet* had been placed in his coat that very

morning by no other than the most beautiful Madame Leslie Pointer. But Bertrand de Volney in love! You do not know his father, the old Comte Roger de Volney, who is, I think, the finest gentleman in all France. I have known the Comte de Volney ever since I was born, and I knew, too, his beautiful, young wife, Bertrand's mother, who died when Bertrand was a baby. The Count was never the same after that crushing blow. I have heard one who was a soldier say that never had he known death to leave so deep a scar.

Had it not been for the boy, I doubt whether he would have lived, but, oh, how that wise old man endeavored to shield his son from such grief as he had experienced! Bertrand grew up bearing in his heart his father's sad lesson that love is a great joy we may not know without suffering. It is the law of compensation. Bertrand all his life was schooled against passion, so that at thirty-five he was an accomplished man of the world whose philosophy was that of the Stoics in so far that he had been taught constantly to subordinate his emotions to reason and to practise virtue, not as the Epicureans did, that happiness might follow, but for its own sake because it is right. He was not cold, no; but—how shall I say?—he was so very reasonable. Bertrand de Volney in love! The idea was enough to make laughter.

No, the music that was in the Vicomte de Volney's heart on that May morning was not the singing of any woman's voice. It was the knowledge that what he was about to do would give pleasure to a friend who was very dear to him.

De Volney turned from the park, and following the broad Rue du Luxembourg into the Rue d'Assas, entered a building whose heavy, carved doors stood wide open as if they meant to invite the world inside. Madame Guillou, the wife of the *conciergerie*, who, in all these years of Paris, had never left off wearing her Breton bonnet, looked up from her task of polishing the glistening oak floor.

"Ah, *bonjour, Monsieur le Vicomte*," she greeted De Volney heartily. "*Monsieur va bien?*" Only she pronounced it

"ben," as she had done when she was a girl in Quimper.

De Volney touched his hat with his riding crop. "Very well, indeed, thank you, Madame Guillou; and how is the good Monsieur Guillou this fine May morning?"

Madame Guillou bent over her work, and if it had not been so dark in the hall I think one might have seen something like a blush come into the plump old cheeks.

"Ah, me, he will never learn wisdom," she confessed with a shake of her head and a subdued chuckle. "Here we are, two old people, married for thirty years come Saint Eustache's day, but he is still the boy, monsieur. He has gone out now to get for me—what does monsieur think? A spray of *muguet*, even such as Monsieur le Vicomte is himself wearing, I observe. Never a year has he missed giving me my *porte-bonheur* on the first day of May. Truly he will never grow sensible."

De Volney laughed. "Bravo for the good Monsieur Guillou; and permit me, madame, to express also my wish that you may have all the good luck possible." He bowed formally as if he had been addressing a duchess, and Madame Guillou made a little curtsy.

"Monsieur le Vicomte is in search of his friend, Monsieur Converse?"

"Yes. Is he in his studio?"

"He is sure to be there and at work on such a bright morning. He works always, Monsieur Converse."

"*Merci*," flung back the Vicomte de Volney from halfway up the first flight of stairs, and Madame Guillou, resting from her labors, followed him with her eyes, musing that some affair of importance must be impelling the Vicomte, who was always so leisurely and dignified, to run up the steps as if he were eighteen instead of thirty-five.

Bertrand de Volney was to me as a younger brother. His father had honored me by consulting me from time to time about Bertrand's education and even letting me have some part in his instruction. It was due to my advice that he was sent to England when he was a boy; nothing widens a man's

sympathies so much as living for a time away from his native land. Like myself, Bertrand counted among his friends many of those English and Americans who come in such great numbers to make their home for a while in Paris, and he was never more contented than when he was with those who were devoting their lives to painting or to music, encouraging them by words of good counsel, for he was well versed in the arts.

Bertrand's interest in those who came from afar to study in our beloved city always gave me a peculiar pleasure. For myself, indeed, there was every reason why I should feel kindly to these Anglo-Saxons, for am I not half American? Was not my own sainted mother from New York, and was it not of her that the young Prince of Wales, when he visited America, said: "She is the most beautiful lady I have ever seen!"

I had the story from my father many times when I was young, and I have had it told me often since by my faithful servant, Gaspard Crampon—Gaspard, who, with his long *favoris* whitening the sides of his face like patches of snow upon a leafless tree, has watched over me since I was a baby. I am still, I fear, in his eyes a child that needs protection. He did not always have white *favoris*, of course, for he was younger than my father when he accompanied him on that journey to America, but I cannot remember him except as he is now. To me he seems always to have been old. And once every year upon the anniversary of my honored father's death he tells me the story.

It was at the great ball given to the young English Prince who came so long afterward to the throne. All the beauty of America was there, and the young Prince looked on, but he did not dance, nor did it appear that he intended to, until he asked suddenly: "Who is that beautiful young girl there standing by the window? She is the most beautiful lady I have ever seen!" It was my own mother. She was not then my mother; she was not even engaged to my father. Then the Prince of Wales took from a vase a red rose, and walking to where my mother stood, made a low bow.

"This," he said, "is the rose of Lancaster. May I ask you to wear it? And may I have the honor of this dance with the fairest of America's daughters?"

Now it so fell that my mother had the moment before promised this dance to my father, and she was placed in the embarrassment of offending her suitor or being guilty of the unpardonable rudeness of slighting one who was her country's honored guest. She glanced at my father, who, seeing her difficulty, smiled with perfect understanding and, bowing ever so slightly, so that no other could see, mutely released her from the promise she had given.

Then it was that my mother, speaking so that those about her might hear, said: "Your Highness honors me above my poor deserts, and the pleasure of Your Highness's favor is increased if I may have the privilege of presenting my future husband, the Prince de Saint-Sauveur."

My father went hot and cold, for that was the first time my mother had let him know he was her accepted suitor. Ever since he had arrived with Gaspard in America to make a tour of the country, and had met the beautiful Miss Schuyler of whom everyone talked, he had forgotten all about the Indians of Fenimore Cooper and the Far West he had intended to see, and had remained in New York to be near the divinity who had fascinated him from the moment he had first beheld her. You may be sure he had lost no time in declaring himself, for Frenchmen are not laggards in love, but my mother had given to him no answer, and he was well-nigh distracted. Ah, it is that way with the American women. They are not won lightly. They hold themselves like a star in the heavens above a man's gaze, and then just when he who worships begins to think the star is too far away ever to be attained by mortal desire, the heavens bend down to him and show him Paradise near at hand.

I have a deep silver vase for roses that is one of my most cherished possessions. On one side are the arms of the house of Lancaster with a ducal coronet above them, and on the other,

in relief, is a rose like the red rose that was offered to my mother by the Prince of Wales, who sent her this vase when she was married.

Is it any wonder then that I should esteem the Anglo-Saxon as my brother, or that I should speak and write the wonderful English language as if it were my own native tongue? No, nor is it any wonder that I should experience a deep pleasure now in setting my hand to the telling of these events which so deeply concerned some of my good friends, and in which I was privileged to have a small part. But now that this much has been explained, I must not obscure this history of others with my own reminiscences. Pardon me, I shall not offend again, for I do not wish to confuse this simple narrative with my personal recollections. It must be simple and straightforward and clear, for, as the wise Marquis de Vauvenargues wrote so long ago, clearness is the good faith of philosophers, and that, I hold, is true of all who write.

II

It was five long flights up to the *atelier* of Mr. Bruce Converse, but the stairs were not of the steepness of ladders such as they are in the houses that have been built in Paris since the Empire fell. They were broad and easy to ascend, and Bertrand de Volney, who exercised every day at riding or fencing or tennis or foot-ing, was not so much as out of breath when he knocked at the studio door.

"Come in," shouted Mr. Converse, but no sooner was the door open and Bertrand had shown his brown beard inside, than other voices greeted him.

"Oh, it's 'Is 'Ighness!" exclaimed young Mr. Sammy Potts.

"Welcome, Your 'Ighness, to our 'umble 'ome!" echoed two other young gentlemen, Mr. Amos Tuttle and Mr. Johnny Judd.

They were three most curious young gentlemen such as in the Latin Quarter are called "types," but they were very amusing and all three worshiped their friend, Mr. Bruce Converse, as art stu-

dents are fond of worshiping some painter a little older than themselves who has, as we say, "arrived." Just to look at them made one laugh. A modern and modish philosopher has ascribed our amusement at the peculiarities of others to the fact that they are in a manner merely exaggerations of our failings. Perhaps it is true. It may be you and I have a secret longing to clothe ourselves in an outlandish fashion that will cause us to be remarked, and so we laugh when we see Mr. Sammy Potts or Mr. Amos Tuttle or Mr. Johnny Judd strolling along the streets with wide velvet *bérets* on the sides of their heads, their legs like balloons in enormous corduroy trousers, flowing black ties knotted loosely about their necks, wearing little coats that always seem too small, and on their feet—sandals.

If I may borrow the expression of a friend of mine, they were "afflicted with too much Trilby." They had most strange ideas which they had got, I am quite sure, from reading over and over Mr. Du Maurier's charming story about Little Billee and Trilby and the weird Mr. Svengali. You may see always in Paris in the Latin Quarter very young gentlemen from America or England who are "afflicted with too much Trilby," but you must not make the mistake of despising them or even considering that they are extraordinarily foolish to wear their droll costumes. They have very sound hearts and very sound bodies under their strange clothes, and if their youthful conception of an artist's life is extravagantly romantic, after all, *c'est un beau rêve de jeunesse*, and none of us is so rich in fulfilled ambitions that he can afford to scoff at any dream of youth.

Mr. Sammy Potts, Mr. Amos Tuttle and Mr. Johnny Judd now surrounded the Vicomte de Volney and inspected his riding costume as if they had never seen such a thing before and as if it were every bit as strange as their own. After all, why was it not? The three and De Volney were good friends. He had won their lasting affection when early in their Latin Quarter experience he had re-

named them Velasquez, Rembrandt and Rubens. They had retaliated by calling the Vicomte de Volney "Is 'Ighness" because he was the first gentleman of title they had met. It was an absurd name and it teased my friend Bertrand not a little, for many of his friends took to calling him "Is 'Ighness," until Bertrand wished he had not been so quick to give names to the young Americans.

"Can't you call them off? I've some important news for you, if they will let me be heard." De Volney appealed to Bruce Converse, who had risen from before his easel and was standing near the group smiling at the efforts of his three young friends to disturb the poise of the Vicomte. Great would have been their delight had they succeeded in ruffling his habitual calm. For answer Bruce Converse put out a long arm, and his strong hand encircled the neck of one of De Volney's tormentors.

"Rough-house!" cried the young gentleman, who found himself held in a grip of steel. It was a word that I must warn you you will not find in any dictionary, for I have searched for it; but it has been explained to me, and though I attempt the definition with diffidence, it is enough to say that the phrase is associated invariably with physical exertion often approximating to violence, and these athletic young gentlemen, who with the exuberance of good health and youth were fond of trying conclusions of strength, had adopted it as a fraternal slogan. True to the oath they had taken always to help each other, the two others responded to the call like knights of old. Bruce Converse, who was a veritable giant for strength, and who was as fond as they were of trying out these friendly tests of muscle—fonder perhaps—received them as they came. The battle was short. For a confusing moment or two arms and legs were flying about the studio—De Volney afterward told me Bruce Converse was like a charging windmill—and then two of the young gentlemen were on the floor with Mr. Converse in his painter's apron sitting on top of them, while the third was in a corner declaring loudly he had been

placed *hors de combat* by a sprained thumb.

Mr. Converse calmly held his two squirming victims on the floor and looked up at De Volney smiling. "I think we can talk quietly now. They are about ready to promise to be good."

He made a handsome picture as he sat there, a young Colossus astride the wriggling forms of his captives. So sure was he of his mastery of them, so confident in his prodigious strength, that upon his flushed, smiling face there was a look of the young gladiator or of the warrior of ancient Gaul.

"We'll be good," came weakly from the two on the floor. Exhausted, they had ceased to struggle. Upon their confession of defeat they were released, and Bruce Converse rose laughing, triumphant, fresh and vigorous, stretching his legs and arms as one does after a morning's good exercise.

"And now for the news," he said.

"I'm afraid it isn't so very important, perhaps," De Volney replied. "I came here this morning because I wished to be the first to tell you that your picture in the Salon has been sold, and to congratulate you."

"Important!" cried Bruce Converse. "You know better than anyone else, De Volney, how very important it is to me; and it is like you to wish to come here with the good news." He held out his hand to the Vicomte, and would probably have said more had not the three young gentlemen, who could never be repressed for long at a time, crowded about him, and, forgetting the resentment caused by their ignominious defeat of a moment before, proceeded to overwhelm Converse with manifestations of their unaffected delight.

"Bully for old Conny!" they shouted in chorus, clapping him vigorously on the back.

"And bully for 'Is 'Ighness, too!" cried one of them.

"Yes, three cheers for 'Is 'Ighness!" the other two echoed. "Who bought it? The State?"

De Volney negated the suggestion with a smiling shake of the head. "Not the State this time. Our friend, Mr.

Converse, when he sold his picture to the State last year, learned that, unfortunately, though our government encourages art it is unwilling to pay highly for it. No, this time the purchaser is one of your own compatriots, a lady who, I have the honor to say, is a friend of mine—Madame Leslie Pointer."

Upon that there was another chorus, for they all had heard of the beautiful Madame Pointer. Only Mr. Converse appeared less elated than he had been when Bertrand first made his news known. He grew reserved, listening to the joyous exclamations of his three young friends without much comment. Presently they left, and he closed the door behind them as they went noisily down the stairs. Then he turned to De Volney and spoke out what it was that burdened his mind, for his nature was not one that could long conceal.

"You are a good friend, De Volney. I wish to thank you," he began.

"It has been nothing," the other interposed.

Mr. Converse went on, disregarding the disclaimer. "It is because you are my friend, my good friend, thinking always of some way to exhibit that friendship that my conscience now is not at rest."

The Vicomte de Volney was perplexed. There was something in the attitude of this tall young man, standing so straight beside him with clear eyes fixed searchingly upon his own, that assumed the significance of a warning.

"It's just this," Converse continued: "I know my pictures are not of the kind that sell."

"Did not the government of France buy one of your pictures for its gallery in the Luxembourg?" interrupted De Volney.

"Yes, and you, yourself, and others of my friends, most of whom I have met through you, have paid out their money for my work, but that is all. The critics, too, write nice enough things about my pictures, but, De Volney, I do not deceive myself; there are few persons who really like what I do."

"My dear fellow, the painters are enthusiastic—"

But Bruce Converse waved his remark aside. "Painters can see what I am after; they can see what I wish to do. They may differ with me or not, but they can understand it. I am not talking about them, but of the people who buy pictures. There's no use denying it. I know it, my friend, and you know it. Such people do not want the work of a man who is trying to break away from old methods. They want something more like what they are accustomed to." The thought brought a line of bitterness about his lips. "It's hard enough to keep on doing a thing in the way one believes is right when no one wants it, no one cares. I beg your pardon, my friend," he added quickly when De Volney raised a gloved hand in protest—"almost no one. I do not count in what I have been saying men like yourself and Prince Florimond de Saint-Sauveur"—he was good enough to mention my name, De Volney told me—"although your encouragement and your faith have meant more to me than I can ever express. But it alone is not enough. I cannot go on forever with just the faith of one or two devoted friends who buy my pictures or get those they know to buy out of charity to help a poor devil along."

The Vicomte de Volney took his time about replying. The surest way to confirm a pessimistic mood is to argue violently against it. "My dear Converse," he assured his friend slowly, "what you say is not new; we have talked of it before. Your experience is but that of every worker in every line of art, who, striving for that which his conscience tells him is right, sees himself passed over, his work neglected by the thousands who do not see with his eyes. The conscience of a good artist is as strict as the conscience of a good woman. Do you suppose that good women, when they see men, their husbands sometimes, allured by other women they know to be bad, do not suffer temptation?"

Converse gloomily assented. "Of course, of course; there is not much room for argument about it. I am not complaining about not being understood; it isn't that; I hope I shall never

flee to that refuge for the incompetent. But what was on my conscience was the fear—" He hesitated, and the Vicomte waited for him to conclude the phrase. "Hang it, De Volney," he blurted out, "I do not wish to seem ungrateful, but, knowing as I do that these pictures of mine do not appeal to many persons, I can't help feeling it was you, my good friend, who induced Mrs. Pointer to buy. You know how beastly hard up I am. You know I've come pretty near the end of my string and the sale of this picture means a lot to me, but I can't accept it. You have done too much already, and it isn't fair to you and it isn't fair to me and it isn't fair—no, it isn't fair to her."

Bertrand stroked his brown beard thoughtfully. "Ho, ho! So it is that?" He laid a hand affectionately on the arm of the young painter. "You do not know this lady. If you did you would not believe she would let herself be led so blindly. Must I tell you what she, herself, said? And have I not already done so? But no, I will tell it all to you on my honor as a gentleman. I had spoken to her of you; I had said that you were my friend. Yes, I had said that much, but I shall tell you what happened. When we entered the room where your painting is, she went through the crowd straight to it.

"See," she said as I followed her, 'there is something that brings real sunshine into the room.' I said not a word, and she stood before your painting for a long time without speaking. At last she said: 'It is the most beautiful picture I have ever seen.' Then it was that I spoke. 'Madame, you are looking upon the painting of my friend,' and I was very proud. That is all. She did not answer, but when the chattering, pushing, inquisitive crowd of *vernissage* day swept us into another room, she said: 'Have we not seen enough of pictures for one day?' And when we were out upon the street again she said: 'I wish that he were also a friend of mine.' 'Madame, he will be most honored,' I assured her. My friend, you will pardon me that I spoke for you. It could not be otherwise. Then as we rode in

the Bois this morning she told me she had bought your picture and was very happy, and even as she spoke she stopped her horse suddenly and with her riding whip pointed to some trees glistening in the fresh sunshine.

"See," she said, 'those are your friend's trees. They are green and cool and living like that in his picture!' I did not—"

"Where were you?" It was the first interruption Mr. Converse had made. He had been standing looking out upon the waving tops of the trees in the Luxembourg gardens, and the expression of doubt and perplexity had slowly faded from his face as De Volney had proceeded until now there was in his eyes a new look of confidence, of hope and resolve.

"We were, I recall, beyond the Cascades. We had just turned into a shaded alley to our left."

Mr. Converse nodded his head. "She was quite right," he said eagerly. "It was there I painted the picture."

The Vicomte smiled within his beard. "Then am I forgiven," he questioned, "that I have made bold to invite the lady here to tea this very afternoon?"

There was a suspicion of panic upon the face of Mr. Bruce Converse as he exclaimed: "Tea! Here! In this barn of a place!"

"She desires very earnestly, as well as to meet my friend, to see my friend's studio," De Volney explained imperterbably.

"She'll be disappointed." Converse glanced apprehensively about the large workroom littered with canvases, some barren of paint, books, papers and small art objects scattered about in apparently hopeless confusion.

"I do not think so." De Volney had a quiet way of expressing his convictions that carried weight.

"Besides, there's nothing here to have tea with—no cups, no saucers, no tea," Converse objected.

"Pardon me, my friend, if I have taken the liberty to think of that also. They can be provided. I should not like to disappoint this lady. She is so very interested in this work of yours that you

think only a few can understand." He smiled a little ironically.

The expression of opposition departed suddenly from Mr. Converse's face and the newly inspired confidence in himself returned. "All right, it can be done," he exclaimed. "Yes, I am more than glad, and again, my friend, grateful to you. I shall get Eleanor—Miss Moore—to arrange it. She can make the place presentable. Yes, Eleanor can carry the thing through perfectly."

Now if I had been there I think I should have observed the smile lurking under Bertrand's beard swiftly disappear and a look of anxiety leap into his eyes. Eleanor Moore! He had not counted upon her! But he was too accustomed to schooling his emotions to allow his countenance to betray his thoughts.

"Miss Moore?" he questioned, and quickly added: "Yes, that will be quite charming; yes, yes, entirely so."

III

CONFESSION is never made easier by postponement, and since this is a truth established by the experience of the youngest of us, I suppose it may as well be confessed now as later that the Vicomte Bertrand de Volney looked upon Miss Eleanor Moore as a most real and imminent danger to the career of his friend, Mr. Bruce Converse. It would have seemed strange past understanding to regard such a sweet and simple creature as a danger to anyone did you not already know of the schooling Bertrand had received from his learned old father, and most firmly he held to the dogma—you may argue about it if you will—that an artist in any field of endeavor must consecrate to that art the first inspiring hours of manhood or womanhood. Love is a flower that, plucked too soon, may wither, and the breast that guards that flower when newly gathered must shelter no other.

If I had but twenty springtimes the less, I should tell you of Eleanor Moore in a way that would the better make you see her, or—I might not dare to tell you

of her at all if I had twenty springtimes the less! For sometimes when I have thought of her or when I have beheld her and felt the sympathetic, human appeal of her beauty, romantic thoughts have upset all philosophy in my brain, and often between my eyes and the book I read, the work of some dry scholar dead long ago, there came such visions that I have gone to stand before my glass that I might take timely note of the fact that my hair is gray at the sides and distressingly thin on top; and recalling this, I have said to myself: "Florimond de Saint-Sauveur, whatever may happen to you, whatever little disappointed griefs you may have in your own heart unknown to anyone else in the world, whatever dreams may come into your romantic head, you will never, never, never be an old fool. You will never, never make yourself believe that at fifty your ancient image can fill the wonderful mirror of a young girl's heart!"

No, no, I merely look on at the comedies I see played about me every day, and I do not aspire to a great part. If it may be that sometimes when I see the comedy becoming too serious I may have the privilege of preventing it from turning into tragedy, I am content. That, I think, is my mission in life: to watch the plays that others act, and sometimes to applaud, and now and then to give a word of advice to the actors which they may accept or not as they consider wise.

So I may tell you of Eleanor Moore calmly. Make for yourself, then, of the colorless words I give you, the portrait of a young girl rather tall, inclined to slenderness, a something boyish in the figure and in the frank gaze resting upon you from eyes as deep blue and luminous as an August star-filled night; eyebrows dark and slightly arched that cast blue shadows when the eyelids close; a wide mouth well acquainted with friendly laughter; lips red and soft, the under one a long, full curve, the upper thinner and forming a delicious bow; the nose straight and delicately modeled; cheeks of creamy whiteness; a low forehead above which hair almost black

waves, giving here and there a glint of burnt sienna such as one sees in polished mahogany. Picture such a head set upon the column of a rounded slender neck that gives it a poise of womanly dignity, and you have a portrait of Eleanor Moore such as a photographer might make of her. But how can I describe to you what a painter would put in the picture? He would show the lips smiling in good fellowship, with, perhaps, the straight white teeth just visible as if the smile were about to broaden into a laugh, for often that was her expression, and he would paint the deep blue eyes aglow with kindly sympathy, causing you to be aware in looking upon the beauty of the face of the greater beauty of the soul.

But no painter could portray for you or tell you with his art of her wonderful voice, of which Karylli, her singing master, said: "There is not another voice like it in the world; *elle vient du bon Dieu ou du diable!*"—Karylli, the wisest and wickedest *maestro* in all Europe. It may be that, spellbound, you yourself have listened to her, yes, that you have had your soul thrilled by her singing, but you could not have known that Elenori, the divine Elenori, was Eleanor Moore. It was Signor Tonnelli, the little king of his realm of opera, who gave to her that *nom de théâtre*, smiling and rubbing his hands because, he said, it was an absurd name that she would make famous. He was like that; he liked to smile when he boasted. But all that is far ahead of my story.

My memory pleases itself to rest upon that afternoon in Mr. Converse's studio. There was so much of laughter and gay talk and high spirits, and all who were there became good friends so quickly. Eleanor had transformed the place even as Mr. Converse had confidently predicted. It was really surprising what a change she had effected in such a little while. Eleanor lived in an apartment in the same house two flights below with her widowed aunt, Mrs. Crackenby, a dry, thin, nervous little lady whose character was amusingly contradictory, for one day she would be assertive and independent, dictating what the whole

world should do, and the very next day perhaps would find her quite helpless and meek, leaning upon Eleanor for moral support and counsel. It was she who had been responsible for Eleanor leaving home to study in Europe. Mrs. Crackenby had been a veritable general in the affair, riding over the objections of poor Mrs. Moore, her sister—objections that Mrs. Crackenby in the heat of argument characterized as "sentimental selfishness"—and defraying the expenses for the experiment out of her own purse, which was none too well filled. But once arrived in Paris, she never lost an opportunity of extolling the advantages of her own country and comparing her own people to the great disadvantage of "these foreigners," as she called the French among whom she had come to dwell. Upon one point, however, she was invariably consistent: her confidence in Eleanor's future never wavered; she was certain that some day "that child's voice" would be heard all over the world. Her pride in her favorite niece furnished the theme of her daily conversation, and might have reached the point of being ridiculous or pathetic had it not been so well justified.

With a light heart and singing at her task, Eleanor had gone about the work of robbing their own apartment to make Bruce Converse's studio beautiful, for in secret she had long cherished the desire to make this workroom of his appear more habitable. Fortunately Mrs. Crackenby was in a helpless mood, and though she would lend no hand, she looked at this spoliation of her home as something she had not the power to prevent; a visitation of fate to which she humbly bowed. Into the service Eleanor impressed the three young gentlemen, Mr. Potts, Mr. Judd and Mr. Tuttle, all of whom were secretly in love with her as became gallant admirers of Trilby, and valiantly they carried tables and chairs and all available ornaments up the two flights, each young gentleman striving to outdo the others, while Mrs. Crackenby watched them tearfully from the landing as one after another of her cherished belongings disappeared heavenward.

Eleanor found time, too, to obtain flowers from a shop in the Rue Vavin, roses, hortensias and *bluets*, and she brought back with her a sprig of *muguet*, which she pinned on the paint-stained blouse of Mr. Converse. He looked into her blue eyes, and his own were suffused with a tender gratitude.

"By Jove, you are certainly a wizard!" he exclaimed. "If you weren't so good-looking, Eleanor, you might be burned as a witch. You've converted this old barn of a studio into a veritable home." Her eyes became carefully occupied with the flower she was pinning on his blouse. "I haven't been so happy since I have been in Paris," he continued, with an appreciative look about his changed surroundings. He looked again at her, and now she could smile back at him like a good comrade. "When these other people have gone, Eleanor, you and your aunt and I will have our own little celebration. We'll go for dinner to the little island in the Bois, and have the man ferry us over in his big gondola and pretend we are in Venice."

"But I have my practising to do; my accompanist is coming." She gave the flower a final touch.

He insisted. "But you must. It's my *fête*. I must celebrate my good fortune." She shook her head. "I won't take any refusal of my invitation," he asserted imperiously.

Joy demands company. Grief may sit alone in a corner, ashamed or afraid to knock at another's door, but Joy rushes in and cries: "Put aside what you have to do and follow me, for I am Joy. I will not let you labor or sorrow, but you must come with me and share in my happiness. I will not be alone!" It is the way of the world, and it is a good way.

When I arrived at the studio Mrs. Crackenby and Eleanor and Mr. Converse and his three young friends were already there, and all were in an expectant attitude, which was most plainly apparent in Fiorella, a model who had been fortuitously engaged to act as maid for the occasion, and who was now nervously trying to remember her duties.

The service most upon her mind was to open the door promptly when anyone rang, so she did not venture far away, but stood with eyes on the door as if it had been a bird and she a cat ready to spring upon it.

Eleanor had seated herself at the table with a shining samovar steaming in front of her. Often I think of her as I saw her then. Her face, usually pale, glowed with color that came and went under her white skin, and in her eyes the reflected light from the samovar made little stars in the blue night. Try as I may to remember the dress she wore, I cannot. All that I know is that it gave the impression of summer, and somewhere about it there was a light shade of green like the green in the stems of white lilies.

I was standing near the door when the bell rang, and Fiorella at a bound opened it to admit Madame Pointer and the Vicomte de Volney. With them was a Mr. Spaulding Knapp, a short, stout, florid gentleman of middle age who walked heavily on his heels. I had met him before at Madame Pointer's. He was one of those *millionnaires* America is celebrated for in Europe, and whose doings and opinions attract so much the attention of their countrymen. My punctuality in arriving at the studio had its reward in a pleasant smile of recognition from Madame Pointer. "This is a delightful surprise. I did not know we were to have the pleasure of seeing you here," she said as I bent over her well shaped gloved hand.

Presentations were quickly made by De Volney, and soon everyone was laughing and talking except Mrs. Crackenby, who, as I had several times before observed, maintained an uncompromising reserve when any of the "foreigners" were near. Madame Pointer had made a very pretty speech to Bruce Converse about his picture that now was hers.

"You have reason to be proud of the friends you possess, Mr. Converse," she added, "for they are extremely loyal admirers. I hope that henceforth you will allow me to count myself among them."

He was greatly flattered, as, indeed,

he should have been. Anyone would have been, I am sure, for Madame Pointer, beautiful and attractive as she was always, had never, it seemed to me, appeared more charming; but I have found myself saying the very same thing of her each time that I have seen her, and I shall probably say it more than once again before I have finished this history. She was dressed in one of those costumes of severe simplicity which so well become American ladies. It was of a dark, soft material, and there was lace at the neck and a lace blouse showing under the coat. The only note of color was a sweeping bird of Paradise on the dark straw hat under which the carefully coiffed hair showed, hair of a soft golden brown that harmonized so well with the plumage above it.

Have you not observed that when a little company is gathered together and a slight embarrassment rests upon all because some of its members are strangers to the others, it very often happens that an incident, a *contretemps*, centering greater embarrassment upon one person for the moment, will so relieve the rest that immediately the atmosphere of constraint vanishes? It was an afternoon of such mishaps. Fiorella, the model, quite nervous about her new and unfamiliar employment, began by shocking everyone when Mr. Spaulding Knapp, who spoke no French, gave into her keeping his hat and cane.

"Will you take these?" he asked, and, seeing that she failed to comprehend, he questioned: "Do you speak English?"

"Yes, my dar-r-ling, goot-bye, damn!" Fiorella proudly replied. Poor girl! It was all the English she knew. Those unconscionable young art students had taught her to repeat her limited vocabulary in that parrotlike fashion.

Soon after the unhappy Fiorella was again the unwilling center of attraction. Eleanor, preparing the first cup of tea, gave a little exclamation of horror as the steaming water flowed from the samovar. Immediately all crowded about her, gazing into the cup.

The water was a brilliant ultramarine!

Alas! Fiorella had followed the example of many a maid more experienced in house cleaning, and, never having before seen a samovar, and imagining it to be a sort of ornamental vase, she had used it as a catch-all. The offending object was fished out. It was one of Mr. Converse's paint brushes which he had been using that very morning. Fiorella had come across it, and it went into the most convenient hiding place. Eleanor was quite crestfallen when her prized samovar was abandoned for an ordinary pitcher, but I dare say the tea was all the better for that, though I am not a connoisseur in the matter of tea. I abominate it. When I was a small boy people in France never drank tea unless they were sick, so it has always reminded me of the apothecary's shop.

There was laughter later at the expense of Mr. Sammy Potts, Mr. Johnny Judd and Mr. Amos Tuttle. Madame Pointer was greatly interested in the young gentlemen, and enthusiastically appealed to Mr. Knapp to share her delight.

"Spaulding, who would ever imagine they came from America? Aren't they exactly what you have always expected to see in the Latin Quarter?"

That remarkable Mr. Spaulding Knapp gave a short, dry laugh. "Not I. As soon as I saw them I knew where they were from. I've been over here often enough to have learned that when an American boy fresh from the United States lands in Paris to study art, that costume breaks out over him the first thing like a rash."

Those three young gentlemen blushed violently when everyone laughed. "Rough-house him!" came the quick command from one, and there is no telling what might have happened if the Vicomte de Volney had not just then been guilty of the unpardonable awkwardness of dropping his cup on the floor—Bertrand de Volney of all men!

It seemed that no one was to escape. Even my turn came. We had all been talking of the noble exercise of walking—footing, as we say—and I had proclaimed my own prowess perhaps a little

vaingloriously, for ever since my youth I have been a great walker. Mrs. Crackenby, who, as I knew from previous conversations with her, shared my enthusiasm for pedestrianism, and who had a way of airing her sometimes astonishing French, spoke up with a tone of authority.

"Oh, oui; je le sais. *Monsoo est un vrai vieux marcheur!*" Which, if you do not know—and I hope you do not—I must tell you means something very different from what it seems to mean. It was a long time before I heard the last of it from Bertrand de Volney.

After the tea Bruce Converse showed us many of his pictures, placing one after another in the frame upon the easel, and that surprising Mr. Spaulding Knapp insisted upon buying three of them for his gallery at home; and they were the very three, as I knew, that Mr. Converse most prized. De Volney and I exchanged glances.

The daylight was slowly fading when Madame Pointer rose to depart. She and Mr. Converse had been talking earnestly together.

"It has been an afternoon of such real delight that I am unwilling it should end." She extended her hand to the painter, and in her musical voice there was a warm, cordial vibration. "Can't we prolong it? The Vicomte de Volney, Mr. Knapp and I are dining together tonight at the Pavillon Henri Quatre at Saint Germain, so that we may look over the valley and see the lights of Paris. We should all be so glad if you would join us."

Eleanor, who was standing near, glanced quickly at Bruce Converse, and a shadow seemed to darken the blue of her eyes as she heard his eager acceptance. Madame Pointer turned toward her.

"Mr. Converse has just promised to make one of our little party at dinner tonight, Miss Moore. Can't you and your aunt go with us?"

Eleanor shook her head. "I'm sorry. My accompanist is coming and I must work."

"Too bad, but I shall not attempt to persuade you away from your work." Madame Pointer responded, her eyes

meeting those of Eleanor in frank friendliness. "I have heard of your singing, and some day I hope you will give me the pleasure you have given others. We must try to repeat this afternoon soon. It has been very delightful. Such joys do not come to us, or at least to me, so often that we can afford to neglect them."

Everyone in leaving thanked Eleanor for the afternoon, just as if she had been the hostess and the studio had been her home and not the home of Mr. Bruce Converse. Indeed, I think no one recalled it had been his tea.

When at last her aunt had gone downstairs and Fiorella had departed, Eleanor was left alone in the darkening studio. The rearrangement of the furniture had been left for the morrow, but in setting to rights the small misplaced objects as most women will before they quit a room, Eleanor came upon the working blouse of Bruce Converse with the spray of *muguet* pinned to it. The flower was already wilted. She smiled wistfully—he had forgotten all about it. And then, though she herself could hardly have told why, she sank into a chair before the easel, and covering her face with her hands, sobbed as if her heart were breaking.

She was still weeping softly when Mrs. Crackenby, whose mood of independence had been slowly returning during the afternoon, called up from the second floor below:

"Eleanor, what can be keeping you?"

There was a note of injury in the voice. Mrs. Crackenby waited the fraction of a minute for a reply before she launched her ultimatum.

"If you don't come down I shall have my dinner alone. You may tear my apartment to pieces, but I do not intend to have my dinner spoiled as well."

Eleanor dried her tears, and closing the studio door, went slowly down the stairs to her dismantled home.

IV

WOMEN suffer more than men from false pride. By false pride I do not mean vanity, which the sexes share

about equally, but that self-consciousness which causes us to fear criticism or misunderstanding of actions that are in themselves blameless. I believe that many a spoiled bud of romance would have opened into full bloom had the light of frank explanations been permitted to dispel chilling clouds of doubt.

If Eleanor Moore had said to Bruce Converse the next day when they were restoring the borrowed feathers that had made his studio so fine to their proper places: "How could you so soon forget the little flower I gave to you?" or "Why were you so eager to accept Madame Pointer's invitation to dinner when you had already invited me?" it is probable I would not now be writing this story; yes, it is very likely there would never have been any story to write, for who ever heard of a book about a young man who said, "I love you," and his sweetheart answered, "I love you, too," and they were married right away without any difficulties intervening whatever? No, books are not written about such simple matters. Yet it quite often happens that way in life, all of which is a reason, I suppose, why so many people who read books prefer philosophies.

However, Eleanor asked no questions of the sort, but listened with much interest while Mr. Converse told her the dinner had been delightful, that Madame Pointer was altogether charming and that he had found Mr. Spaulding Knapp to be a very discerning art critic. As for the broken engagement, it never entered his head; besides, had not Eleanor declined his invitation even though he had said he would not accept her refusal? And as for the *muguet*, Mr. Bruce Converse never once thought of it again until he found a sprig of grass pinned on his blouse. It broke into bits as he removed it, and he smiled quite contentedly as he thought of how successful the tea in his studio had been and what a trump Eleanor was to go to all that trouble.

But they had dinner on the island in the Bois, none the less, and the very next night; but it was too cold to eat under the trees, so they must go inside, and though they were not able to make

believe it was Venice, they all had a very good time and felt better for it, even Mrs. Crackenby.

"Ever since you showed me what could be done with that studio of mine, Eleanor," announced Bruce Converse as the three drove back to the city, "I've determined to have a home. I intend to spend a part of this newly acquired wealth in getting things to make the place look as it did when you got through with it. I want you to help me, for there's no one who knows more about fitting up a comfortable home than you."

Mrs. Crackenby, who was not given to subtleties, scented a vague danger.

"If Eleanor ever has a home of her own," she proclaimed, "it won't be over here among foreigners, but in her own country where she belongs."

"Oh, come now, Aunt Ella," teased Converse, who long ago had permitted himself the familiarity of adoption, "you can't pretend these 'foreigners' aren't able to teach us a good deal."

"Oh, I admit that part of it," assented Aunt Ella, abandoning, however, none of her attitude of battle. "They're older than we are and have had a lot more time than we have ever had to paint and sing and play the piano, but people, I hold, belong in their own countries, and after they've learned what the foreigners can teach them it's time they should go back home."

Converse laughed heartily. "Be careful, Aunt Ella," he warned, "or I'll have to take you through the Louvre again." The threat was reminiscent of a memorable visit to the old masters when Mrs. Crackenby had summed up her impressions by saying that if the museum didn't soon get something new the people would stop coming to it.

It was quite another Aunt Ella, an Aunt Ella complacent and yielding, who went with them when Bruce Converse made his first purchase for the home he was building, a carved Breton chest that he had often admired at Madame Geiger's shop in the Boulevard Montparnasse. Madame Geiger squinted at them doubtfully as they entered, but when she saw how young and lovely was Eleanor and how handsome was Mr.

Bruce Converse, she became quite human and insisted upon showing them sets of china and many other things that two young persons who thought of beginning housekeeping should surely have.

More than one treasure left Madame Geiger's tempting shop that day: a marvelous ancient *cave à liqueurs* of inlaid pearl that had been the state present of a Chinese noble, a *chaise-longue* and two *fauteuils* that were guaranteed "of the epoch," a complete tea service and I know not what else; and Mr. Converse insisted that he should receive them all that very afternoon even if he had to go out himself and get a cart to carry them away. Madame Geiger at first said it was impossible, as she always does, and at last she consented to have it done, as she always does. There were frames to be bought and a color bill to be paid at Monsieur Foinet's in the Rue Vavin and so many other things to buy that it was late when they all got home, and Mrs. Crackenby was tired and almost weepingly complained that she was never allowed a moment's peace in her life. She felt better after a good hot dinner, which they all had together in Mrs. Crackenby's apartment, but she could not be persuaded to climb the stairs to see how Bruce Converse's purchases looked now that they were in the studio where good Monsieur Guillou with necessary help had placed them.

Eleanor, who, if she was tired, did not say so, helped the painter arrange his new possessions. There was much changing about to do and not many opportunities to rest, but it was good fun and she enjoyed directing this young giant to move the furniture from one place to another and see him lift the heavy chairs almost as easily as if they had been jack straws. Implicitly he executed her commands. Heavy pictures were held up untiringly for an indefinite time against the wall until she could decide upon exactly the spot where the nail should be driven, and the great Breton chest, which took three men to carry it up to the studio, was dragged about the room until it had been "tried" in every available corner. It was well that the Russian author who

lived in the apartment directly below had departed with his family for the summer.

At last the work was finished, and Bruce Converse leaned back in the *chaise-longue* and Eleanor sat in one of the chairs that was of the epoch, and together they surveyed their achievement.

"It really begins to look like a home," he announced with satisfaction. "I feel just as if I were going to be married."

Oh, youth! Oh, springtime—that puts thoughts of nest building into our heads! Eleanor laughed. They were both very happy.

"And I feel," she said, rising with a sigh of content, "that Aunt Ella will soon be wondering what has become of me."

But he would not let her go. She must stay a little longer while he talked of his future, which now, so suddenly, had become bright and assured to him. He painted for her that future broadly and with vivid colors as he painted his landscapes. Bruce Converse as an artist or as a man was not a sentimentalist. The picture he painted had in it no figure of a woman, but one felt rather than saw there the presence of one who was fair and lovely beyond comparison and who sang throughout the summer day, lending, as says that most human of the great poets, the music of her voice until the world was filled with gladness. Where was then that little cloud that for a moment had darkened Eleanor's horizon? Where were the tears she had so lately shed in that very place? Gone, and in their stead was the bright sunshine lying golden and warm upon green trees and in the sky the rainbow of God's promise.

"Good night, Bruce." He held the hand she had outstretched to him until they were upon the landing. Suddenly he raised it to his lips and covered it with kisses.

"You have been very good to me, Eleanor." His voice trembled and the hand that still held hers shook a little. "Sometimes I feel that I am a selfish brute, thinking only of myself and my own affairs and showing you very little

of the gratitude I feel toward you for all that you are continually doing for me."

With an effort she held her own voice steady and level, and raised her eyes to his unabashed in the old spirit of their comradeship. "Good night." And she went swiftly down the stairs.

He leaned over the balustrade, holding for her a lighted candle that illumined the steps and cast dark wavering shadows in the corners. He heard her key enter the lock of her door.

"Good night, Eleanor," he called down to her.

"Good night, Bruce," the half-whispered greeting came up to him.

V

MAY is the most beautiful month of all the year in Paris. It is then that the trees are greenest, the sky bluest, the grass softest and the air clearest. The winter blanket of dull skies is rolled off, and Nature leaps out of her bed with a little sigh of contentment, for it is so good to be alive. It is then, too, that the chestnut trees along the Champs-Élysées are white with bloom, and that alone is enough to make the city beautiful.

The Vicomte de Volney and Madame Leslie Pointer were among those who strolled down the Champs-Élysées on that fifth day of May with the whole world made radiant by the beams of the afternoon sun. It is on this fifth day of May that many years ago a great Frenchman breathed his last. Now the Vicomte de Volney is not a Bonapartist and neither am I. His forefathers and mine were not very well disposed to the little corporal who tore down the lovely temple of ancient France and drove out those who worshiped therein, but those days are long since passed, and we of the younger generation know that General Bonaparte was a great man of France, one of the greatest men of all times. And on the fifth day of May, which is the day of his death in Sainte-Hélène, the sun sets directly within that Arc de Triomphe raised to his fame. If you stand in the Place de la Concorde, you

can see the red ball sink between the sides of the arch like a celestial torch illumining the red path of glory.

It is a sight that is worth seeing. Pilgrimages have been made—yes, for a long time they were made every year—just to see what can be seen on no other day in the entire calendar, and now the Vicomte de Volney was walking down the broad tree-lined avenue, the most beautiful street in the world, that he might show Madame Pointer this wonderful thing. They made their way in leisurely fashion, with the declining sun at their backs, talking about many things and now and then bowing to some passing acquaintance in one of the never ending processions of automobiles and carriages that swept by them. The fountains of the Rond Point were playing, and they stopped for a moment to watch them before crossing over the avenue to the side nearest the river, where they stood observing the effect of the sun through the marble archway. While it made its quick, brilliant progress neither of them spoke.

The glorious day ended in a burst of red that tinged the whole western sky, and then, before their eyes, the red began to fade, changing into purples and orange, with the Arc de Triomphe looming up in silhouette like a great black tomb at the top of the avenue. De Volney, without speaking, touched his companion lightly on the arm and motioned to her to look across the river. The winged angels of the Pont Alexandre III, with their leaping horses, shone like molten gold, and, beyond them, over the exquisite roof of the Invalides, rose the gilded dome of the real tomb of the Emperor, catching the last rays of the dying sun. At that moment it seemed as if even the day had been ordained by the great conqueror who lay alone in the crypt below that dome of gold; yes, it seemed as if the world were only waiting to follow again his bidding as once it did.

When they turned to go they were both still under the spell of that grandiose spectacle they had witnessed, but presently they fell to talking about it, which is always an indication that the first ineffable impression one has re-

ceived has hardened into the tangible. In the process of fixing it upon the memory, and in the attempt to define what one has felt, there is something that escapes.

Madame Pointer, her sympathies quickened by what she had seen, spoke with feeling of Napoleon as having been treated ungratefully by Destiny, in whom his faith was so strong.

"Do you believe in Destiny?" asked the Vicomte.

"And you?" she parried, for a woman likes to have first the opinion of her questioner.

"Not in the sense that it is blind and fatal," he replied. "Men make their own destinies, or more often their destinies are made for them by their friends or their enemies. I believe that we are more dependent upon our friends, or rather upon those around us, than we are upon ourselves."

Madame Pointer looked at him questioning, not concealing her surprise, for he was speaking with unwonted seriousness and his words seemed at variance with her estimate of his own character. She did not consider that he would lightly brook the interference of either friends or enemies with his own affairs. "Don't misunderstand me," he continued in answer to her glance—he had a way of responding to her questions before she had formulated them into words; "I do not mean that men may lie back idly waiting for their friends to act for them. It is a curious fact that, no matter how close our relationship may be to others, in the little crises of life, as in the last great crisis, we must take our way alone. But it is also true, despite a seeming contradiction, that sometimes a word that we speak aptly or a deed that is done at a critical moment may change the lives of our friends. It often so happens that we see their way more clearly than they can see it for themselves."

In Madame Pointer's mind was the clear memory of recent conversations they had had regarding the future of Bruce Converse and of Eleanor Moore. She smiled as she asked with a touch of kindly irony:

"And you would like to play the part of Destiny in the career of your talented young friend, Mr. Converse?"

She had hoped the lightness of her tone would alter his mood, for never had she known him to be so profoundly serious; he seemed almost somber. But De Volney suddenly stopped, and facing her, looked into her smiling eyes with an earnestness that, in spite of herself, startled her. "Madame Pointer," he said, "I want you as an ally. I want your help."

She could not hide her astonishment. "My help? I do not see—" she began, but he interrupted her.

"I need your help. For some time I have worked alone—for a long time, it seems to me, ever since I first saw the possibility of those two falling hopelessly in love with each other, making wrecks of their careers merely because they do not know. Now I feel that I am doomed to failure if someone, some woman, does not help. It is not I who am doomed to failure; the real failures will be those two with talents far above the ordinary, touching already the higher world of genius, who are ready to throw it all away, yes, to throw all that away—" He was speaking more rapidly than was his custom, and the English words overran themselves, coming as they would without his stopping to choose them.

"They could be so much, those two, they could do so much; and then, at this time while they are yet forming, while their minds are still the minds of little children and while they are so swiftly climbing up to the very high places, they throw it all away for—love!" He could not conceal his contempt. "Oh, if they could only be dissuaded; if they could be prevented from doing this great harm to themselves!" His open hand stretched slightly out toward her in appeal, and it impressed her, for gestures were rare to him.

"I know you will argue," he went on. "I am aware of what you have already intimated. Your woman's heart, the sensitiveness of all good women that makes them shrink from causing suffering or inflicting the slightest pain

though good may follow, will not let you see this as it is. He and she are dropping into this thing unconsciously. They don't even know they are in love; at least, Converse does not. Men seldom do know they are in love until it is, as you say, all over. She suspects, I think. Women generally suspect."

She glanced at him sharply to determine whether cynicism lay under his remark, but she saw in the man before her only one who was deeply concerned in the welfare of his friend, and her disposition to taunt him for taking the subject too gravely yielded to admiration for one whose interest in another was so genuine and unselfish.

"Might they not be happy together and aid instead of harming each other?" she urged.

As if he had again discerned the working of her mind and had seen the subtle change that had been brought about in her attitude, his own tone altered as they resumed their walk up the avenue. He no longer appealed, but discussed the situation of his friend with calm logic. "They would only stand in each other's way," he asserted in reply to her question. "Miss Moore is really a harmful influence to Bruce Converse at this time; that is, I mean the sentiment she inspires is harmful to his work and to her own, not that she herself is harmful. Certainly she does not mean to do him any injury. She would sacrifice anything for him, for his success. Women are like that; they make sacrifices more readily than men do."

Madame Pointer smiled. At least this man, who was supposed to regard all women as dangerous potentialities, knew how to be just.

"It is this way, to illustrate," he continued: "I went to his studio yesterday. Miss Moore was there. It was in the morning when, as she has told me, she generally practises. When I came in he was seated before his easel, and on it was a big unfinished portrait of her. Have you seen his portraits of her?"

Madame Pointer answered in the negative.

"He does not show them—now," said De Volney, with a pause before the

last word. "They are bad and he knows it, but he does not understand why. It is because he is not a portrait painter and never should attempt to be, but it disappoints him because he does not succeed when he tries it. He becomes discouraged, for he would like to be able to paint portraits. Most artists who paint landscapes have the desire to paint portraits when they are young. Converse wastes much time at them. Now Miss Moore knows that he would like to be a painter of portraits, and because it is his wish she tries to help him gratify it. She poses for him. She does all that she can to encourage him. She does not understand that it is bad for him. Women never do understand when they are in love that anything can be bad for the man they love if he wants it. When I came in I found my friend in one of those moods that invariably follow his essays in portraiture. In spite of all the encouragement he has had recently, he was in the depths. He had not been working. Ah, I knew what he had been doing. He had been quarreling with himself, but he did not wish me to know, for I had talked to him before. I went to the picture and looked at it closely. 'Take care,' he said; 'you will get your beard in the paint.' It was a little subterfuge, for I could see the canvas was quite dry. I passed my hand over it just to show him I knew he had not touched it that morning. I do not know how long she had been there, but she was already tired from standing while he had been trying to force himself to the task. He had not had the heart to begin. Poor chap! How blue he was! You see how it is," he concluded.

An automobile drew up to the curb, swinging in swiftly from the oil-blackened center of the avenue. From it leaped Mr. Spaulding Knapp. He came toward them holding out his hand. "Good!" he ejaculated. "I got a glimpse of you two from my car just as I was on my way to the Bois. Let me take you for a spin before it is quite dark."

Madame Pointer welcomed the advent of this friend of her youth. She

was vaguely troubled by the Vicomte de Volney's remarks, and more than once this alert, shrewd man of affairs with his quick judgment had brought her comfort by timely words of advice.

"Spaulding," she said suddenly, "if two young persons are in love with each other, is it a wise thing to step in between them in order that they may follow out to success their great careers?"

He looked at her quizzically as if he expected some jest to underlie her words, but in the gaze that he encountered he read something of her perturbation. Unhesitatingly, punctuating his speech with a short, decisive gesture, he gave his opinion. "All the careers of men and women the world has ever seen," he declared, "are not worth a single hour of the happiness that a true and good love can bring."

Madame Pointer glanced at De Volney, mutely challenging him to enter the lists with this new champion whose opinions were so often dominant in great affairs.

"I am surprised," answered the Vicomte, meeting her glance and speaking slowly. "I had thought the business men of America were so practical, so wise. I did not know they had such high appreciation of—of sentiment."

"Vicomte," replied that surprising Mr. Spaulding Knapp, "that is one of your mistaken European notions. The American business man is really the most romantic idealist in the world today."

Both Madame Pointer and the Vicomte de Volney laughed heartily at the unexpected response. Mr. Knapp, however, persisted.

"You are incredulous, both of you—even you, Leslie, who as an American should know better," he said. "But come, I will convince you as we ride along."

They entered the automobile, and as they made their way through the Avenue du Bois past the returning line of carriages, he continued his argument, contrasting with keen humor the tranquil, satisfied existences of wealthy Europeans with the ambitious, fevered lives of American millionaires. "They work

until they go to their graves," he said, "because they are never satisfied; and the lack of satisfaction is the proof positive of the possession of an ideal. We may differ about the value or the beauty of these ideals. It may be the founding of a great university; it may be the bestowal of libraries for the poor; it may be the building of hospitals for the sick or it may be the acquisition of power such as inspired your own Napoleon, Vicomte; but they are all ideals and romantic, too. You cannot deny it."

They had entered the Bois and were swiftly speeding through the *allées* of arched trees. The Vicomte looked at Madame Pointer. He might have spoken, but he saw that she was not attending to the argument, but was drinking in the peace and fragrance of the darkening woods. The serenity of the approaching night seemed to communicate itself to them all and they were silent.

VI

It was very soon after this that Gaspard brought in to me a letter from Madame Pointer. My faithful old servant is becoming as suspicious as a cat. His solicitous gaze was fixed upon me as he delivered the missive as if he would have said had he dared: "I know the handwriting on this envelope. I have seen it before on letters that have come to this house. It were well that my master have a care." Ordinarily Gaspard's jealous watchfulness serves only to amuse me, but now I was conscious of being annoyed. The advent of Madame Pointer's letter had coincided happily with a moment of pleasant fancy I wished to prolong, and I found it difficult to do so with old Gaspard standing by.

"You remain there idly staring. Is it that you have nothing to do?" I asked him with some acerbity.

"The lady's servant who brought the letter said he was to wait for an answer." Slyly he had let me know that he was not ignorant of the identity of my correspondent.

"I shall ring for you when my answer is ready." He withdrew reproachfully. Left alone, I sought again to reconstruct my day dream. Strange how the imagination paints a vivid, complete picture from the most trifling suggestion! I had but to close my eyes and, as if loosed from the envelope I had opened, there seemed to come into my room the womanly, gentle, friendly spirit of Madame Leslie Pointer. I saw her there before me. How satisfying she was to look upon! Here was one whose beauty was mature yet delicate and spiritual like the pictures of the Preraphaelites, a beauty of the type that the English people a generation ago claimed as their own. How refined and sympathetic was her trained intelligence; how kindly and companionable her humor! I felt I had but to open my eyes and she would be standing there, her lips parted, ready to speak. Perhaps—

"Did monsieur ring?" It was Gaspar standing at the door stupidly. Sometimes the teachings of philosophy are difficult to put into practice.

"I had not even formulated the intention of ringing," I said to him with severity, and his white *favoris* disappeared again behind the closed door as I took from its envelope the note Madame Pointer had written. It was brief:

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Will you come and have tea with me this afternoon? I wish to see you on a matter of importance. I shall be alone.

Hastily I despatched my acceptance, placing myself at her disposition.

How beautiful was that ride to Ville d'Avray, where Madame Pointer had installed herself in a villa by the side of that charming lake so beloved of Corot! Impatient and spurred by curiosity though I was, I could have wished that lovely stretch of road between the lines of tall poplars were longer. Often as I have traversed it I would have prolonged the pleasure.

The day was quite warm, but the treetops swayed lazily to a light breeze. It was too warm, in fact, and the moment my automobile stopped at the villa after

winding through the little park surrounding it, I was conscious that the day was considerably hotter than we are accustomed to early in May. But Madame Pointer, of whom I had caught a glimpse as I drove up, looked refreshingly cool as she walked gracefully across the grass to greet me. Her dress was of white, of fine linen, perhaps, or it may have been of the material that is called lawn, for there was about it a softness, the quality of caressing the figure, that fine lawn has, and yet it had that crisp freshness one observes in linen dresses and is grateful for on a hot day.

She led the way to a tea table under one of the great oak trees near the villa, and no sooner were we seated than she launched into an explanation of her note. De Volney had convinced her. Together they had formed quite a plot to prevent Eleanor Moore and Bruce Converse from rushing or falling or leaping—whatever word you wish to express precipitate action—into tangles of the affections that would divert their interest at this critical time from their careers. She and De Volney had planned well. There was to be no active opposition such as only too often fans the flame of love, but Eleanor and Bruce Converse were to be so artfully hedged about by circumstances that they would naturally drift apart rather than toward each other. De Volney was to see in a few days Signor Tonnelli, the famous impresario, on Eleanor's behalf. If he were successful—and De Volney tolerated no doubt of it—Eleanor's immediate work would keep her entirely occupied; it might probably take her away from Paris. Madame Pointer on her side was to induce Bruce Converse by the offer of attractive commissions to undertake work that would keep him away from the studio and the dangerous proximity of Eleanor.

"They must not be allowed to fall in love," she asserted very earnestly when she had outlined the plot to me. "We must prevent them. It is our duty as their friends. We are counting upon your aid, for you can help us a great deal."

May I be forgiven for offering the

cold conclusions of a student of books at a time when Madame Pointer's warm heart sought practical assistance, but the opportunity of discoursing on the philosophy of love with this beautiful lady was a temptation I could not resist.

It is a dangerous playground for conversation, this theme of love, yet men and women eagerly enter upon it, scorning the signs of warning that Experience has posted at its boundaries. Lightly they tread together its mazes, now pursuing, now evading each other, now laughing while yet the game is only one of "Come and find me," now suddenly with tear-filled eyes when one at last is caught and the other, with object attained, finds the zest gone from the sport; now suddenly facing each other, serious eyes looking into serious eyes and reading there the realization that what had begun as a pleasant pastime to while away an hour or a day has become an occupation to last a whole life long.

Yes, it is a dangerous playground, but imagine the soft, alluring languor of early summer in the air; the breeze caressing amorously the rose trees and bringing the perfume to our senses; picture the sylvan scene and this lady as dainty as any of the noble shepherdesses Boucher used to paint.

"Madame Pointer," I began, "you have not honored me by requesting my advice; you ask from me a different form of service, and that is sufficient honor for me. Surely I could discourage no project that you and Bertrand de Volney were joined in promoting, but—" I halted lamely, seeking an excuse for the discourse I was about to pronounce, but finding none that seemed adequate, I waited for her own imagination to supply what I might have said.

"The sentiment of love," I went on, attacking the subject without further apology, "the sentiment of love as an inspiration of human activity has occupied the attention of philosophers from the time of Socrates and Plato down to the most modern of moderns. Aristotle in his famous Table of Categories classed passion as sixth among the ten continents of human thought; but, believe me, in assigning to it such an in-

ferior place he was hardly less in error than in his absurd conception that the universe was a hollow globe to which the stars were pinned fast and that the whole revolved about the motionless earth. To the ancients love was the aspiration of the soul for the beautiful. In some such fashion was it treated by Plato, Plutarch and Petrarch. The wise Marcus Aurelius, though he was himself deceived, preached of love's efficiency, and another whose Christian meditations centuries later remind one strangely of Rome's good emperor said in his 'Imitation': 'A strong lover standeth in temptations nor will he believe in the wily persuasions of the enemy.'"

I paused that she might have time to apply this sentiment to the particular case of Bruce Converse. She acknowledged her understanding of the point by a smiling nod of the head, but waited to hear what I would say further.

"Pascal, the learned and virtuous, who devoted an imperishable *pensée* to Cleopatra's nose," I continued, "confessed with Corneille that 'the cause of love is I know not what and the effects are dreadful.' Thus, madame, it has been with those who founded their philosophies on the testimony of the senses after the manner of the ancients. Though their great intellects have essayed the analysis of love, its causes and its effects alike have been beyond their wisdom.

"But these sentiments," cried Madame Pointer suddenly, her glance fixed upon me with disconcerting amusement—"these sentiments are but the dry philosophy of the ancients. Fie, Prince Florimond, you are not going to class yourself among them! I shall not permit it."

I had not looked for attack from this quarter. For a moment I was nonplused and must clearly have shown it. No, surely, I had no intention of classing myself with the ancients. Admire their teachings I might, but I was not willing to be of them, least of all at that moment! I had had my theme well in hand, but at a simple word from her its thread had fallen from my grasp. I was groping for it while she was laughing at

me. With one gesture I swept all the ancients to perdition, but sternly held to my text.

"Oh, your moderns, most modern lady," I protested, "are just as serious when discussing this fruitful subject of love; more serious, in fact. These later philosophers who received their original inspiration from Descartes have reached widely differing conclusions.

"We may read with repulsion Nietzsche, who gave scarcely a thought to passion except as the desire of possession but who studied as minutely as a microscopist this aspect of the eternal attraction of the two sexes. With him the inspiration is the instinct, the craving to possess. With what relief we turn from this cruel dissection to the exquisite book Michelet wrote half a century ago when France *était malade*, and which is today as fresh and beautiful and true as it was then. 'Love,' he says, 'is not a crisis, a drama in a single act. It is a succession, often long, of widely differing passions which nourish life and renew it.' Stendhal before him had divided love into four phases, each with its subdivisions. He defined love as a crystallization which our own learned Monsieur Faguet, who is a member of that Academy to which my father added luster, maintains is but a manifestation of the curiosity which attracts sex to sex. Yes, he would have us believe that man seeks the woman or woman seeks the man because imagination whets the curiosity to discover in the soul of one that which is in harmony with or opposed to qualities in the soul of the other. It is not so much, he holds, the desire to possess as the desire to know. With Schopenhauer love is the genius of the race, the inborn impulse of procreation. Your own Emerson, who wrote of passion with such pure spirituality, treated love as a divine madness in the blood of youth. Alas, that the gentle sage should limit the priceless possession to those who are under thirty!"

"No one who is more than thirty will agree with him," Madame Pointer interposed with a laugh.

"No; I for one am quite sure the philosopher who was so wise in other

lore was there in error," I replied, "but thus you may see the phenomenon of love has been studied by the great men of all ages, who have endeavored to discover the secret by regarding it spiritually or physiologically or even pathologically. But neither ancient nor modern, Madame Pointer, has been able to define love so that those who will may regulate its cause or its effect. It comes we do not know how nor why, nor can we prescribe to whom it shall come or when. It is, I think—if I may venture my own poor opinion in the company of such distinguished men as I have cited—love is, I think, a natural law the manifestations of which are too manifold and its operations too delicate for our finite minds to compass. Those who obey it obey not because they would but because they must. For those to whom it comes it is not a part of life; it is life itself. They are no longer of the world; the world is of them. True love does not stop to consider or falter when opposed. In the eyes of lovers love alone exists; no other sentiment, no other attribute, no other possession is allowed the privilege of comparison. Between all other things and it there is the difference that lies between the earthly and the divine. Love converts the clod into life. It makes giants of the meanest of men; it gives beauty to the least favored of women. And this natural law, that flows through the universe like a subtle warming fluid which our unilluminated eyes may not behold, takes contact when and where and with whom it will, joining two together so that they make one—one in body, one in mind, one in spirit. Those two so joined may be so close that hand can rest in hand and lip touch lip, or a whole world may lie between them and still they will be indivisibly one; neither time nor space can separate them.

"Though the sight of lovers is so common that, try as they may, they cannot disguise themselves from the most innocent of eyes, they escape from us if we would seek to hold them or direct them. One whom the passion has touched may seek his mate, and, as a graceful poet of the English has said, 'look all ways to

find her,' but we cannot lead him to where she stands waiting. Or, finding two together, he may not even see the one we would have pointed out, but takes the one beside her. We may say in all good faith to the prince: 'Here is your princess,' and stand in uncomprehending wonder while he, with radiant countenance, chooses the peasant we have ignored. And Youth, despite your gentle philosopher, may look into the eyes of Age and find there only Youth and Beauty. Like may attract like or, as Schopenhauer admirably reasons, opposite attract opposite. There is no rule. The sum of human experience is as Pascal has said: 'We do not know.'

"And yet, Madame Pointer, this Law of Love is one we may not break. We cannot successfully oppose it. We cannot govern it, if it be true love. We cannot control it in our own beings; how much less then can we expect to control it in the lives of others?"

She looked at me, her expressive, intelligent eyes moist with sympathy. Poor lady! She had heard me through my discourse with admirable patience, even with a close interest which I hope was not entirely feigned.

"It was not our intention to force them against their will," she protested. "We would not, I hope, be so unwise, and certainly we could not be so heartless as to do that. But we do wish, if it be possible, to remove the temptation from them or to remove them from temptation. They should not be allowed just now to mar their future by an unwise attachment. Oh, no, really they should not. We wish to keep them apart for the present. There can be no harm in that. If their love be really worthy, it will not be destroyed by a short separation. And we counted on your help. You are such a friend of Miss Moore; she admires you so sincerely and places such reliance on your counsel. We wanted you to be much with her at this time that may be so critical to her. Something must be done. The Vicomte de Volney had counted upon you so implicitly. He will be so disappointed if you will not

lend your aid. Oh, we must have your help, Prince Flo—"

She checked herself abruptly and a wave of crimson surged upward over her face. "I beg your pardon," she said. "I had nearly called you Prince Florimond. So many of your friends speak of you in that way instead of by your family name. And then the Vicomte de Volney, of course, calls you always by your first name. It came quite unconsciously to my lips."

It was true. I knew that few of my friends ever employed my surname. "I beg of you, my dear lady," I replied, "do not apologize. Instead, grant me the delight of knowing you are among those who thus testify their approving friendship for me."

Madame Pointer looked at me with a pleased smile. "Will you have one lump, or two, Prince—Florimond?" she asked.

Upon my word she said it so prettily that I forgot entirely my aversion to tea, and stammered, "Two, please," before I thought, and then I was forced to drink that concoction which was bitter-sweet like the medicine of childhood.

As I was trying to make the best of it, a servant approached and presented to Madame Pointer a card which she read with a little exclamation that was, I thought, not unmixed with pleasure.

"Invite the gentleman to come here," she said to the servant, and then, turning to me: "It is the Duc de Mirabelle. Surely you must know him."

The Duc de Mirabelle! I despised the fellow. He was one of those upstart Frenchmen whose titles have grown and flourished under the republic, and who are to be encountered rarely in the salons of the French but always in the company of Americans of wealth. I abhor the type.

"Mirabelle, madame," I answered, rather scornfully, playing upon the word in French, "is one of our commonest fruits, but I have never heard the name applied to a flower of France."

She laughed uneasily and rose as Mirabelle came walking across the lawn to us with easy assurance, an overdressed, foppish dandy with curled mus-

taches and wearing a monocle. I bowed to him coldly and soon after took my leave, for as I listened to him conversing familiarly with Madame Pointer, moving her at times to laughter with his shallow wit, it would have been beyond my powers long to have been civil to him.

That night I felt myself in evil mood, foolishly irritated by the untimely visit of that Mirabelle. So I read until late in the "Moralia" of Plutarch, and probably because I had referred to it in talking to Madame Pointer, I turned again to his comforting essay on Amity. Into my mind came the recollection of the plot that had been formed and which I had been asked to assist. Though my sober sense persuaded me it was folly, I found a pleasure in being associated in a plot with so fair a plotter, and I fell asleep remembering how charmingly she had said: "Prince Florimond."

VII

"EL-EA-NOR!"

It was the voice of Mrs. Crackenby calling up the stairway. It would seem that the good lady often called thus, for she confessed complainingly to me as I stood by her side that the Russian author was at such times wont to poke his shaggy head out of his door with a querulous "*Madame! Je vous prie!*" and a bearded Frenchman who wrote comic plays and lived opposite on the same floor would open his door and shout "Oh, yes!" until Aunt Ella would retire exclaiming sarcastically: "They talk of the politeness of the French!"

"El-ea-nor!" She could call undisturbed this afternoon, for neither the Russian nor the Frenchman was at home to hear her and protest. I had come to call upon Miss Moore, and now waited while Mrs. Crackenby tried to make herself heard by her niece, who was in Mr. Converse's studio.

"Pray do not further derange yourself," I requested, observing that her vocal efforts were unavailing. "I shall take the liberty of ascending to the studio that I may have the pleasure of seeing them both."

"She should be working," Mrs. Crackenby complained. "I tell her she wastes lots of time sitting for her picture that never seems to get finished, but she only laughs at me." Mounting the stairs, I heard the good lady still complaining as she reentered her apartment.

Eleanor herself came to the door in response to my ring. Both she and Mr. Converse welcomed me cordially. Converse seemed really relieved that I had come to interrupt him in his work, and, looking upon the portrait of Eleanor before which he sat, I saw that it had progressed badly, for the face had been entirely painted out and he was about to begin again. Oh, fortunate *métier* of the artist that permits one with a stroke of the brush to obliterate faults and start anew! We talked about his work, Mr. Converse frankly admitting his failure and consequent discontent.

"I can't make it go to suit me," he confessed gloomily. "I've tried as hard as I know how, but it's simply a botch."

"Really, I think it's my fault. I'm such a poor model," Eleanor put in. "I always want to talk, and I am so constantly getting out of the pose that Bruce stops in sheer disgust."

Converse shook his head and smiled at her attempt to take upon herself the blame for his failure. "It isn't that," he said. "I'd like to persuade myself that what you say is true, but, unfortunately for me, I know it isn't."

No compunctions of conscience disquieted me when I urged them to go with me for an automobile run into the country. Eleanor would not go, as she wished to practise, and I truly think she was glad of the opportunity to return to her work, but Converse accompanied me, and purposely I had the man drive us to Fontainebleau and Barbizon, and we made excursions along little roads leading off the *routes nationales* past bits of country reminiscent of the pictures of Millet, Rousseau and others of that famous company who had painted in the surrounding woods and fields. Converse's depression vanished.

"By Jove," he exclaimed enthusiastically, "it's enough to make a fellow wish

to jump right out of the automobile and begin painting!"

I assented. "Nature just now is in that stage that most baffles you painters, the stage between spring and summer. The sunshine gives to the trees and grass a feeling of youth and vigor, but all around are the subtle indications that the year is arriving at maturity. Were I an artist, it is now that I should most wish to employ the resources of my art to seizing that which is so difficult to express on canvas."

We talked not at all of portraiture. He was eager to be at work out of doors; the studio had too long claimed him. He would return to these scenes the very next day, he said, and begin to paint in earnest. Willingly I placed at his disposal my automobile to convey him to Fontainebleau when he wished. We returned to the city rather late and he dined with me at my home, still talking enthusiastically of the work he intended to accomplish.

De Volney is right. We are often little stones on the mountain side waiting for some hand to release us and start us rolling, but, mind you, we must at least have the ability to roll. Bruce Converse did what he said he would do: he began the painting of landscapes and Eleanor's portrait was pushed into a corner with its painted-out face turned toward the wall.

It was De Volney's hand that next started a stone rolling on the mountain side. He had been awaiting the arrival in Paris of Signor Tonnelli, and no sooner had the great little man appeared than Bertrand arranged that he should hear Eleanor sing. As Bertrand and I went together to inform Eleanor, I stopped as we passed through the old Rue des Saints Pères, where I love to linger, and made the purchase of an antique fan of rare beauty as a slight offering to Eleanor, prompted, I dare say, in measure, by my unquiet conscience, which would never relish this little plot of ours. She was delighted with the small gift and grateful beyond expression for the opportunity of being heard by the famous Signor Tonnelli, and after she had tried to thank us she ran up the stairs

to acquaint Bruce Converse with the good news. She returned crestfallen. He was not there.

"He is never in the studio any more," she explained, while De Volney and I looked straight ahead of us.

The meeting with Signor Tonnelli was to be at ten o'clock precisely the next morning, and both De Volney and I were there upon the hour, but Eleanor had not yet come. Tonnelli was a round little man with a white face and gray, close-cropped beard nearly white, and with dark, sharp eyes that flashed even when he was not speaking. His conversation was a series of small explosions. He spoke many languages, all except his own badly.

"Your Mees—ah, what is it, her name?—your Mees Moore, your wonderful Mees Moore, is late, eh?" he said to De Volney. "Do not be surprise, for I am not. It show she is already a true prima donna, eh?" He smiled ironically.

Eleanor came in soon after, and I observed that Tonnelli became at once gruffer and seemed ready to storm. She apologized very sweetly as she gave him her hand.

"Yes, you are late," he blurted out. "You have made me to wait feefteen minute—but then my time it is a nothing to me, eh? Oh, I have so mucha time I do not know what to do with him. I have only about feefty more younga lady to hear sing while I am in Paris—feefty more younga lady with the beautiful voice to wait for, and tomorrow I go away to London."

It was a bad beginning, and matters were not much helped when Eleanor said to him, "I am very sorry."

"Bah! It is of no consequence," was the nearest he would come to accepting her apology. "What you bring to sing?"

"Manon." It was with pleasure that I perceived she had with her the fan I had presented.

"Yes," grunted Tonnelli. "They all wish to sing 'Manon' and they all bringa the fan." He might have been speaking of an army of drilled Amazons, and I should not have refrained from

giving the little man a lesson in politeness, great impresario or not, if De Volney had not intervened.

"My friend Signor Tonnelli is an old bear, Miss Moore," he said drily, "but he has no claws, and he is much too tame and too gentle to bite. I beg you not to be alarmed if he growls, for he takes a great pleasure in growling."

Tonnelli laughed in spite of himself, and Eleanor laughed, too, though not very naturally, and I could not laugh at all. I did not get into a good humor with that little man again until Eleanor was singing, "*Je marche sur tous les chemins*," and then I saw that his eyes were no longer full of spiteful fire, and the smile of irony under his white mustaches was gone, and he was looking upon Eleanor as if he had never spoken gruffly in his life and would be willing to wait any number of minutes she chose if only she would sing to him.

"Bravo!" encouraged De Volney when the air was finished and Eleanor had sung it in the key it is written in Massenet's original score.

"H'mph! It is not bad," was Signor Tonnelli's only comment, but he got up from his chair at the end of the big room, and coming up to the piano, quickly dug out from a mass of music the score of an opera.

"There, sing that," he said, thrusting the open book into Eleanor's hands.

"Oh, do you love that? So do I," she exclaimed. I was standing by her side, having just added my congratulations to those of the others. The opera Tonnelli had chosen was "*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*," and the book was open at Antonia's song: "*C'est une chanson d'amour*."

"Love it! I did not say I love it. I wish to hear you sing it."

"But I have never studied it."

"You have sung it, though."

"Yes, but for myself. I have never been taught how it should be sung."

"That is what I want. I want to hear you sing something just as you want to sing it for yourself, not as that Professor Karylli has taught you to sing it."

"You know Professor Karylli is my teacher?"

"Yes."

"Who told you?" There was astonishment upon Eleanor's face, but it disappeared as she glanced toward Bertrand. "Oh, it was the Vicomte de Volney, of course."

Tonnelli gave a little explosion. "No, younga lady, it was not the Vicomte de Volney; it was just your voice. *Sacré*—" He would have said more, but he checked himself. "Sing it," he commanded with an abrupt gesture as he went back to his seat.

You know that wonderful song of Antonia. Once it rang through Paris, but that was when I was a very young man, and now it is the Barcarole that one always hears. Oh, that song of Antonia as Eleanor sang it for us then!

*C'est une chanson d'amour
Qui s'envole,
Triste ou folle,
Tour à tour;
C'est une chanson d'amour.*

Signor Tonnelli listened with his eyes closed, but his head nodded from time to time and a smile was upon his face very different from the smile that had angered me. I was foolish to have been so provoked; this roud little man had his mind fixed on other things than politeness or pretty speeches. What were conventional forms to him? He wished to break through the surface and discover what lay hidden beneath. He seemed to me to be quite a fine old man as I looked at him there with his eyes closed and his head nodding. When Eleanor finished the song with a gasp, as it is done upon the scene, a surprising transformation was wrought in Signor Tonnelli. He leaped from his chair, and in a voice remarkably clear and true carried on Hoffmann's part of the duet:

"*Qu'as tu donc?*"

but no sooner had he done so than he appeared to regret it and stood looking at us all sheepishly.

"I do not wish to hear anything more," he announced, his attitude changing again into gruffness; but alas now for the make-believe of this little man who was really gentle-hearted and mild, he could not continue with the pretense. "Younga lady," he con-

fessed, "I will not say I wish not to hear any more, for that would not be true. I would wish to hear all you would sing to me, but it must not be for today. Ah, I shall wish all that for another time." His small black eyes were glistening and he held out his hand. "I thank you; Tonnelli thanks you, but—" He would not go on.

"Please say what you were going to say, Signor Tonnelli," Eleanor pleaded.

"*Sapristi!* I meant that for another time, but, yes, I shall say it now. Do you wish to be a prima donna? Do you wish to sing? You are not just a trifle like so many younga lady? You do not wait just for some rich man to fall in love with you, eh? And then it will all go likea that—pouf! No, mademoiselle, I will not believe that. You wish to sing, is it not? You wish to sing not just for you or just for me or just for a man who say he love you, but for the whole world. Don't you or do you?"

"I think I know what you mean. I wish to sing."

"Yes, yes, for everyone, for the whole world."

"Yes, for everyone who will hear me, and for the love of singing."

"Good! I knew it was true. One has only to look at you to know what you say is true. Then, listen. You will go with me away to Spain; you will give up the study with Karylli; you will study with a teacher who is better than Karylli, whom I will get for you; you will study six month, perhaps it is a year. I will give you a contract. I will pay you while you study. Then you will come back here and I will have you to sing in Paris. Will you do it?"

"Give up study with Professor Karylli?" Eleanor echoed. It was unbelievable—Karylli who was known as the greatest of masters!

"Karylli!" thundered Signor Tonnelli, who was very much excited. "Karylli! He is the worst teacher you could have! He is a magician, yes; he is a terribly wise wizard who knows more about the human voice than even I do, younga lady; but he is a bad man and he does not know how to train a

pure voice like yours. When you sing I know who put those bad qualities into your voice. I do not have to be told who it is. I know. He is a bad man, and he can make the voice of a woman like you, yes, even like you he can make the voice seem just like an obscene song. There might be some—yes, do I not know?—there would be a great many who would clap their hands and shout if they heard you sing as Karylli would have you sing. They would be like those poor people who laugh when they see the painted women walk along the boulevard. But no, that is not real success. It is not for you. There is something higher than that; it is way up beyond it; and Karylli, he cannot go there. He is like your Mephistopheles when he see the cross. You must give him up, you hear? You must have nothing more to do with him. You must trust in me. If you sign the contract I will make you such a singer as the world is waiting for. Do I not know? Do I not know the great public? Yes, and I know, though it laugh at what is bad, it is always waiting for what is best."

He was in quite a fever of excitement. Under his gray beard his cheeks burned, his breath came fast, his small fat hands flew about like pigeons not knowing where to alight. Very small indeed were his eyes, but the fire seemed to leap from them and send sparks into the air. Eleanor looked straight at him, quite overcome by his ardor. We were all so astonished we did not think of speaking. Suddenly he stopped.

"There, there," he growled, as if half angry with himself for having been so wrought to fervor, "there, there, I have said all those thing I did not mean to say today. When you sang 'Manon' for me I knew who put those bad woman tricks into your voice and I could have cried, I was so angry and so sorry. But I thought I will tell you about it some other time when you got to know me better, and so I ask you to sing that '*chanson d'amour*' and then I just could not help it. I had to tell you. Now you must go. I want you to think about what I have said alone and you will see

I am right. Then you come to me. We will be friends. Good-bye."

He was actually pushing all three of us to the door. Even De Volney let himself be hurried out in that fashion, and Signor Tonnelli apparently forgot he was there until he saw him standing in the hallway.

"Ah, my good friend," he apologized, "I thank you so verria much."

He gave his hand to Eleanor, smiling a little as he had done when we had first seen him. "Promise me one thing, younga lady," he said with a twinkle in his eyes. "Promise me when you are a great prima donna you will not be too—cranky."

Then he closed the door without even so much as a glance at me. I think he did not remember I had been there at all.

VIII

THERE was much congratulating and felicitating and handshaking all round when we were out upon the street again, and I dare say those who passed us as we stood gaily talking and laughing wondered what it was that made us so elated. Bertrand summoned an open *fiacre*, into which Eleanor and I got, expecting him to follow, but, instead, he lifted his hat ceremoniously and made us a little speech.

"Florimond, I envy you, for you are this day the most favored of mortals. You are permitted to ride by the side of the great singer for whom the world waits. Has not the Signor Tonnelli told us? To you, Florimond, is given that which the gods alone have always, the privilege of sharing happiness and fame when it is new. Guard Miss Moore well; she is precious now not only to her friends but to the whole world. I leave her in your care, envying you the honor." He then gaily addressed Eleanor. "Mademoiselle, I make the sacrifice. My duty calls me to Ville d'Avray, that I may acquaint Madame Pointer with your triumph, that there may be another one happy this day because you are happy. *Mademoiselle—monsieur—je vous salue.*"

We waved our hands to him as the cab drove away, and Eleanor continued to look back at Bertrand and wave to him until we turned a corner and he was hidden from her sight. Surreptitiously she raised a handkerchief to her eyes and was silent. The action had not escaped me, and I respected her emotion too much to attempt conversation. I, too, was busy with my own thoughts, for this suggestion of Signor Tonnelli to take Eleanor away from Paris had sprung, I knew, from his own desires. Perfectly as it accorded with the wishes of those who were in the little plot, it had not been arranged by them, and I pictured the delight the news would give to Madame Pointer. Gladly would I have been the messenger of the welcome tidings, but, after all, it was Bertrand's right: the audition Signor Tonnelli had accorded Eleanor had been of Bertrand's devising.

After a long silence Eleanor spoke. "How glad Bruce will be to hear what Signor Tonnelli said!" she remarked musingly. So that, I reflected, was the home hive to which her thoughts were winging with their freight of honey. "And how excited Aunt Ella will be!" she added, but Aunt Ella was so evidently an afterthought.

An inspiration came to me. "You and your aunt and Mr. Converse will do me the honor of dining with me this evening." It would not be wise to allow those two young people to be alone at this critical time. I think she was about to dissent, but I added that I would not accept a refusal, and so it was arranged. We dined very well at Lavenue's. Mrs. Crackenby and I had Bruce Converse and Eleanor between us, and we listened to them talking away enthusiastically as only young people can talk when the great door of life is just swinging open to them and they get a glimpse inside and see only the brilliant lights and the friendly throng waiting to receive them. Experience has taught me that nothing rubs out the dull marks of the years so effectively as association with younger and more enthusiastic persons. I am sure, with those two between us talking away

so hopefully and confidently and optimistically, Mrs. Crackenby and I for the time being left twenty years behind us, hung them up, as it were, with her wrap and my hat behind the door, out of sight, forgotten.

Afterward we went into the café and heard Schumacher play on the violin, bringing to life again with his sympathetic mastery ancient favorites, song ghosts of the so long ago, until along with Eleanor and Bruce and even Mrs. Crackenby I was humming melodies that I had hummed in my youth. How often in listening to music I have been reminded of the words of Richter: "Thou speakest to me of things which in all my endless life I have not found and shall not find." More than once that evening I trod familiar fields of asphodel where I once had stood even as Bruce and Eleanor were standing now, on tip-toe with enthusiastic expectancy.

Ah, the fleeting rapture of youth's dreaming! Forgetful and forgetting, we gaze upon the supernal vision, fondly fancying it can never fade, and suddenly, before we are aware, it is gone. And perhaps, long after, when some Schumacher plays the violin, it comes again to us but only for a moment. Even as we try to fasten its familiar features, searching in the vague recollection for the charm that once enthralled us, someone leaves the café door ajar and we discover we are sitting in a draught and in danger of catching cold. The fear of draughts is the beginning of old age.

It was the next day that I gave myself the pleasure of seeing Madame Pointer, but I was not to enjoy conversing with her uninterruptedly regarding our friends. Mr. Spaulding Knapp was at the villa when I arrived, and he and Madame Pointer were so deeply engrossed in the project for some entertainment in the near future that they must at once take me into their plans.

"Mr. Knapp has grown restless and wishes to be sailing for America," she explained. "It has been with the greatest difficulty I have persuaded him it is his patriotic duty to celebrate the Fourth of July on land instead of on the sea, and

he has consented to remain over to be one of our party. Of course you will give us the pleasure of your company as a good American, Prince de Saint-Sauveur."

I could only bow my acknowledgment, for Mr. Knapp exclaimed enthusiastically: "Yes, Prince, I have agreed to stay over if Leslie will have a regular old-fashioned spread eagle Fourth."

Now I did not know what it was, this spread of the eagle Fourth, and so I asked him to explain. He only laughed. "You must wait and see. It cannot be described."

It was all arranged, and I assisted with their planning. Our little company of friends was to be at Madame Pointer's on the occasion of the national holiday: De Volney and Bruce Converse and Eleanor and Mrs. Crackenby and Signor Tonnelli, if he should be still in France, and the three young gentlemen who were studying art and Madame Pointer's mother, who was expected from America. There was to be a dinner under the trees and speeches and fireworks, but still I could not learn what it was, this spreading of the eagle. Madame Pointer and Mr. Knapp laughed a great deal about that.

When we had exhausted the subject of the celebration and were all in a very good humor about it, the talk turned to Eleanor Moore and Bruce Converse. Mr. Knapp appeared to be informed of the plot that had been devised, for after Madame Pointer had congratulated me and thanked me very gracefully for the small part I had taken, that surprising Mr. Knapp cast a damper upon our spirits by sounding a warning.

"Be careful, Leslie," he cautioned, "or those you seek to befriend will only hate you for your trouble."

He was so solemn we both laughed, for he could not be aware that the plot was progressing so smoothly and well and that Eleanor and Bruce Converse were entirely happy, their thoughts occupied with the glorious work each intended to perform. We knew their content to be so complete and we felt such a just pleasure in what we had been able to do for them that Mr. Knapp's

unexpected attitude provoked only our merriment. He would not admit his error, for he was, I think, an obstinate man, but he turned the talk into other channels, and soon after, pleading the need of exercise, left us, and we could see him walking on the winding, shaded road that led up to the villa, his sturdy figure swinging along briskly, his short strides giving the impression of activity, his heels descending sharply upon the gravel road as if even in his exercise his nature showed itself to be aggressive.

"I was not aware Monsieur Knapp was so timid," I remarked with a smile, as I observed Madame Pointer also regarding him.

"Spaulding has become a true sentimentalist," she confided. "It must be the effect of your wonderful France, Prince Florimond."

That made me very gay. "Ah, madame, France is wonderful, but even it cannot convert your cold, practical business man into a sentimentalist. There must be some other cause."

I was amused by the idea, but Madame Pointer was serious. "You must not laugh at him too much," she urged, and I thought I detected a note of pity in her voice. "Spaulding Knapp is not as cold and practical as you may think."

"Laugh at him, my dear Madame Pointer! I honor him all the more."

"Ah, but you do laugh at him, even though you would wish not to. Some day it may be that I will tell you—" She was speaking as if in a reverie, and as if the words had escaped her without her willing it, for she paused abruptly, shaking her head.

"Some day—" I urged, for I was quite curious as to what she had been about to say.

"No; I cannot tell you, even 'some day,' but I wish you to know, Prince Florimond, that Spaulding Knapp has been my good friend for many years. I have sought his advice and help in sorrow and suffering, and I may at times have appeared to him cruelly ungrateful, but he has never failed. He is the staunchest friend I have ever known."

I bowed my head. "Madame, there are men who would give all they possess

to be honored by such a tribute from you."

It may have been fancy, but I thought that when Mr. Knapp returned she treated him with added tenderness. Her remarks and the disclosure she had seemed about to make and had not made persisted in my memory. I began to see affairs in another light. Strange that never before had I regarded Mr. Spaulding Knapp as her suitor, but now it seemed clear; otherwise why should he who gave himself so little leisure, and who was known for his slavish attention to his business, absent himself from those affairs and remain so long in Europe? I confess I should not have considered him the type of man that would be attractive as a suitor to such a lady as Madame Pointer, but are there many women who would not find irresistible the combination of a kind, generous heart and a colossal fortune?

Madame Pointer urged him very cordially to remain for dinner and the invitation was extended to me. We were persuaded without much difficulty to accept, and had a charming dinner served on the veranda by candle light. Afterward we sat about the table, Monsieur Knapp smoking his big cigars and I my cigarettes until the moon rose and the nightingales began singing in the trees near us, filling the warm night with their music, to which we listened silently.

When I arrived at my home that night Gaspard was waiting up to tell me that the Vicomte de Volney had called and wished urgently to see me. He would return the next morning.

A remarkable part of life is, I think, not that we have so little faith but that we have so much. It is of the commonest experience that what we were most sure of turns out to be the opposite of what we had considered it to be. We become certain of one thing only to discover it is another. All our lives long from the first moments of cognition we are being deceived and undeceived—which is sometimes the more cruel of the two—but we go on in spite of this, placing complete reliance in the testimony of our senses; we go on believing that what seems to be true is true.

Not one of us had doubted that Bruce Converse and Eleanor were so occupied with their work, and that their minds were so completely filled with the careers opening so auspiciously for them, that there no longer existed any danger that they would shipwreck the hopes we had formed for them by dashing themselves upon rocks we had with such pains caused them to avoid. Bertrand, when he came to my house the next morning, shattered that confidence in a sentence.

"Miss Moore will not sign the contract with Tonnelli," he announced. "She says it is because of Karylli; that she does not wish to appear ungrateful. Can you believe that such is the real motive?"

I agreed with him that it was most unlikely. "She puts him off without a definite answer until his patience is becoming exhausted," Bertrand continued, speaking rapidly. "No, the real reason is that she does not want to leave Paris as long as Bruce Converse is here. And as for Converse! He is no longer painting landscapes. I have been to his studio. He is again at work on that miserable portrait. The truth is, Florimond, they have fallen more deeply in love than ever. We have worked blindly. Now it may be too late, but whatever can be done must be done at once."

I waited. De Volney was not one to lack ideas, and presently he outlined the plan he had formed. Tonnelli, who was as much set upon taking Eleanor away as we were upon having her go, was to force her decision by a sort of ultimatum; Madame Pointer was to lose no time in going to the chateau she had taken near Fontainebleau, and she was to invite Converse to be her guest there; her invitation would be one that he could not well decline. Thus were Eleanor and Bruce Converse to be separated.

We went to see Madame Pointer that morning. She was alarmed at the state of affairs De Volney described, and readily consented to do her part. To me was assigned the pleasant role of entertainer to Eleanor and Mrs. Crackenby, devising invitations that should consume a good deal of Eleanor's leisure. De Vol-

ney was to fill a similar office in regard to Mr. Converse. Between us we made quite an elaborate plot. We became true conspirators. But would we succeed? We all felt that exquisite doubt which must come to every schemer as the moment approaches when his carefully conceived plot is to be put to the test.

IX

It was a day of radiant perfection, such a day as the responding soul would embrace and hold forever. The sunshine was tempered by the occasional passing of light cumulous clouds and a constant fresh breeze that was not boisterous enough to annoy but sufficiently strong to add life to the landscape by setting the treetops to dancing and starting endless trains of pursuing ripples upon the surface of lake and river. An atmosphere of holiday, a sentiment of the Sabbath such as one often observes in nature, spread over city and country. As I rode on my way to attend that celebration at the home of Madame Pointer, when I should learn of the spread of the eagle, I observed that many of the houses lining the avenues were closed, and I suddenly realized that the season, as we know it in Paris, was ended; the butterfly of fashion that spreads its wings so early had taken flight. The observation occasioned surprise, for so swiftly had the days passed I was unaware the summer was already so advanced.

We were to dine early because of the fireworks that were to follow, and I arrived at the villa an hour before the appointed time, but already the *fête* appeared to be in progress, for even from the roadside I heard voices singing a patriotic song and I had no difficulty in distinguishing the vocal efforts of Mr. Sammy Potts, Mr. Amos Tuttle and Mr. Johnny Judd. They were endeavoring to compensate for their lack of technical training by fervor of expression. Unhappily for their patriotic intentions, they could not remember the words. No doubt they welcomed the diversion caused by my arrival.

Madame Pointer presented me to her mother, Madame Worthing, who had arrived in France the day before, a lovely and lovable old lady with snow white hair framing features as regular as those of her daughter. How few old ladies nowadays have snow white hair, and how delightful it is to find such a one who has grown old so gracefully that she has lost none of her interest in life! Mr. Spaulding Knapp had been at the villa all the afternoon aiding in arranging the celebration, and De Volney had come early to be of service, so I found them both there when I arrived. Eleanor and Mrs. Crackenby came soon after, and with them was Signor Tonnelli. Bruce Converse joined the party later. He had been painting near the villa, and showed us the sketch he had made, a sunny sweep of the Seine Valley with a line of Lombardy poplars in the foreground, which was greatly admired by us all.

Over the gathering was that spirit of informal jollity that is a part of what the English call picnics and which we of France have endeavored vainly to imitate. Laughing, talking, those who had come to take part in the celebration formed now a great group with all listening to one person; now small groups of three or four and sometimes two or only one would be together, all meeting and parting again and changing like the colored bits of glass in a kaleidoscope. Bertrand and I had the opportunity for a conversation apart. We were both, I think, more than a little excited by the knowledge that this evening would probably prove crucial so far as the plans we had formed were concerned.

Signor Tonnelli had not yet delivered the threatened ultimatum, failing to agree with our opinion that such a course would be wise. He declined to precipitate matters as long as the possibility existed of Eleanor acting as was desired upon her own initiative.

"My experience teach me," he explained, "that when anyone try to force a woman to decide against her will, she will decide the way he does not wish." But Signor Tonnelli was leaving for San Sebastian in a day or two, and Eleanor's

answer could not be delayed much longer.

Madame Pointer had also postponed her invitation to Bruce Converse. In talking it over we had agreed that the present celebration would be an excellent occasion. Madame Pointer and her mother were departing from Paris as soon as they could, and there would not be much time for Mr. Converse to consider the invitation. He would, indeed, be forced to give his answer at once.

I had seen Eleanor and Bruce Converse several times recently, and my observation told me that De Volney's fears were not without reason. The two had plainly passed that stage of admiration which Stendhal characterizes as the first step in love, and had rapidly progressed to what the author of "*L'Amour*" considers the fifth degree, the beginning of the first crystallization, that unmeasurable period of exaltation when "it is only necessary to think of a perfection to discover it in the person one loves."

As De Volney and I talked over these things the scene before us changed. Darkness had begun, and under the trees appeared round glowing lights of orange and green and red and yellow like full moons of many colors. So ingeniously had the lanterns been placed I had not observed them until they thus suddenly burst forth in their brilliance.

The dinner was served in a bower near the villa. At one end of the long table was Madame Pointer and at the other Mr. Spaulding Knapp, who took an undisguised delight in the proceedings. Never had I known him before to exhibit so much of that vivacity of interest in trivial matters that demonstrates one has the heart still young. He acted as director of the feast, spurring each one to conversation and laughter. I will not say that I have assisted at no dinner where there was so much to interest, but I will say that never have I been present at a dinner when there was more of merriment. Nor can I recall why it was that all of us laughed so much, but I have never had much patience with those philosophers who seek to analyze too closely the secret of our laughter. We should be content that we can laugh

without thinking too much about the reason why we are amused.

When the dinner was at an end, Mr. Knapp announced that there would be speeches and that each one would be expected to say something appropriate to the day. He would begin, he said, and turning to me as he pushed his chair back with ceremony, he remarked: "Prince, you will now kindly observe how that eagle is spread."

Although most attentively I listened, I cannot describe to you that speech nor tell you what he said. It is beyond my powers. I had not before heard anything like it. With an expression of great solemnity Mr. Spaulding Knapp poured forth so many rolling, high-sounding words that I grew confused. Often was he interrupted at some particularly sonorous sentence by cries of "Hip, hip, hooray!" from the three young art students, and each time Mr. Knapp gravely bowed his appreciation as the others added their applause.

Madame Pointer, at whose right I had the honor of being placed, turned to me with tears of laughter in her eyes. "He used to do that to amuse us when he was a young man just beginning to take an interest in political affairs," she whispered to me; and Bruce Converse, who sat opposite, and who had been laughing more heartily than I had ever seen him laugh, leaned across the table to say: "You might not believe it, but I have heard political orators make almost identically the same speech."

When Mr. Knapp had concluded with a great flourish his remarkable oration, he bowed to the applause, and as he took his seat called to me at the other end of the table, with a twinkle in his eye: "Now, Prince, do you understand what it is, the spread of the eagle?"

"I am not altogether sure," I answered, "but I think I have obtained an inkling," which caused them all to laugh again.

No one could make a speech like Mr. Knapp. Ah, no, that was not to be expected, but each one said something very well indeed, I thought, and last of all Eleanor sang one of those songs that all English speaking people know the

world over, and we joined her in singing the chorus.

The *feu d'artifice* was all that Mr. Knapp had promised. He had been true to his word, and had found, where I do not know, what he called "real American fireworks," which made a pretty show in the park. Grouped at a little distance from them, we watched the rockets and bombs and colored fires with exclamations of delight. We were in the part of the park most distant from the villa, and when the exhibition was ended and we turned to make our way to the house, our eyes had looked so long upon the brilliant display that it seemed very dark under the big trees. So obscure was the walk that Eleanor, who was beside me, took my arm. We could hear in front of us the laughter of the others without seeing them except when one or another would pass for a moment under a suspended lantern.

Madame Pointer and Bruce Converse were a few yards in advance of us, and as we neared the villa we observed them pause under a red lantern the candle of which was sputtering. They were talking excitedly. Suddenly Madame Pointer held out her hand to the young painter, who seized it fervently.

"It is agreed, then," we heard her cry jubilantly. "You will come with us. I have your promise?"

"My promise!" he replied gaily. "You have my eternal gratitude."

"Splendid!" and she shook his hand warmly as they passed laughing out from under the reflection of the lantern and were hidden in the darkness.

I felt Eleanor's arm tighten upon my own, and I thought I heard her sigh, but I was probably mistaken, for she had been silent, almost *triste*, I had thought; but now she began talking with animation of the beauty of the fireworks and of the merriment of the dinner, and she was still talking when we came to the villa, where the others were already making their farewells. It was while we were thus engaged that Madame Pointer, announcing that she would leave the villa within a few days to go with her mother to the chateau they had taken near Fontainebleau, told all of us

that Bruce Converse was to visit them there, where he would have close at hand the landscapes that inspired Millet and Corot and all that glorious little band. She was very happy, and urged all of us to come to the chateau if we could, and Mr. Sammy Potts, Mr. Amos Tuttle and Mr. Johnny Judd said they would surely accept the invitation during the summer that they might see how closely Bruce Converse approached the masters on their own ground. They were very proud of him.

"And I hope that you will come to make us a visit, too," said Madame Pointer to Signor Tonnelli as she gave him her hand in parting.

"Ah, madame, it is not possible." He shook his head with lugubrious exaggeration. "You are verria kind, but, no, it is not possible. I shall be so far away. I shall be sad. You are all so verria happy here. Only me, the poor impresario, I am not happy. Mees Moore, she has not said she will sign the contract I make for her. I find a younga lady with a most beautiful voice; I want to make her a great prima donna, and she will not let me."

He shook his head again, and the little man seemed quite pathetic as he related his misfortune. We all looked from him to Eleanor. Her head was thrown slightly back, her lips pressed tightly together until they made only a thin straight line, and her eyes seemed to have changed from blue to black. There was something almost defiant in her attitude as she faced Signor Tonnelli.

"I am ready to sign," she said without a tremor.

He could not believe her. "Ready, ah, yes," he repeated ironically, "but when?"

"When you wish. Now, if you like."

"You mean it?"

"Yes."

Like a magician the little impresario took from his pocket the contract, and with another gesture that reminded one more and more of the tricks men perform upon the stage, he produced a pen, and very quickly unscrewing the cap, placed the pen and the paper in Eleanor's hands.

"We have a celebration, too, eh?" he exclaimed. We could all see how excited he was, though he tried hard to appear natural.

Eleanor was as calm as the night itself. "Where?" was all she asked as she spread the paper open upon a table at her side.

"There, there," cried Signor Tonnelli, putting one of his fat little hands at the bottom of the sheet. "You sign there." We could see his finger shaking, but Eleanor wrote her name quite deliberately and handed the paper back to him as if it were something that had no importance at all.

It seemed as if regaining that bit of paper caused Signor Tonnelli's agitation to disappear. He no longer smiled as I should have thought he would do. "*Gratia*," he said almost curtly. "And when do we leave, mademoiselle?"

"When you wish," responded Eleanor, as if the matter were not of pressing interest.

"The day after tomorrow, then, we go to Spain."

"As you will."

We had all been watching this scene as one watches a play, but now everyone crowded about Eleanor congratulating her. Bruce Converse was among the first.

"It's glorious, Eleanor," he said. "We all know what this will mean."

"Perhaps," she answered vaguely.

"It means that I shall be mighty busy packing," said Mrs. Crackenby. "They decide on the spur of the moment to go away to Spain the day after tomorrow without asking me so much as, 'Can you get ready?'" She joined in the laughter that followed her complaint. "I'm not objecting," she said. "If she had listened to me she would have signed Mr. Tonnelli's contract long ago."

When leavetaking was begun again Bruce Converse came to Eleanor's side, but I thought that now there was a constraint in his manner that was not usual. "You are going to give me the pleasure of taking home the prima donna, I hope," he said, smiling somewhat uncertainly.

"Thank you," answered Eleanor with

just a touch of formality, "but Prince Florimond has consented to see us home. Please do not trouble."

Pride is a strange tyrant that governs women, says Stendhal. Now, though earlier in the evening I had asked of Eleanor the honor of escorting her and her aunt and Signor Tonnelli back to the city, she had replied indirectly, giving me the impression that she was otherwise engaged. Therefore I was not a little surprised at what I had heard, but it gave me no less pleasure.

On the way home Eleanor was in a gay humor. She laughed and talked, and now and then when the rest of us seemed ready to let a general silence follow her sprightly conversation, she hummed for Signor Tonnelli bits of operas she wished to study with her new teacher in Spain. It delighted me to see her in such a bright mood, and Mrs. Crackenby gave oral testimony of her appreciation.

"I haven't seen you in such good spirits for I do not know how long, Eleanor," she asserted. "Dear me, not since that tea in Mr. Converse's studio," she added, as if her memory had suddenly come to her aid in recalling the time when her niece was the embodiment of joyous good humor.

X

LOOKING backward through the minifying lenses of past years is much like regarding the scene through reversed opera glasses. Time seems to turn the glasses round about, so that what once appeared to us as all-important, obscuring everything else, assumes its relative place and we see it as it really was.

Thus I can see clearly enough now that the pleasant party at Madame Pointer's marked for us all the great change, though it seemed at the time merely an enjoyable celebration such as our small company of friends would likely repeat time and again. Within less than a week Madame Pointer had gone with her mother to their chateau, whither Bruce Converse had followed them; Eleanor and Mrs. Crackenby and

Signor Tonnelli had departed for Spain, Mr. Spaulding Knapp had embarked for America, De Volney had gone to Trouville and I had taken Gaspard and the other servants with me to my home on the Loire. Even Mr. Judd, Mr. Potts and Mr. Tuttle had left Paris to find inspiration at Pont Aven in Brittany. Alas, it was to be many a long day before we were all reunited!

That summer and autumn were unlike any others I had ever experienced. It may have been due to the abrupt change from the bright and gay company of our friends in Paris, but for the first time the solitude of my old home weighed upon me. For years past when once I was installed in the old chateau I loved so well, where the very stones seemed like living companions, it had been impossible to persuade me to desert it until the leaves of the great trees in the park were molding on the ground, but now I was aware of an unpleasant restlessness, and old occupations failed to interest. The country seemed arched over with an indescribable melancholy, as if the sunny skies of the Loire valley had become continually gray.

Three times during that summer I had pleasant notes from Madame Pointer, asking me to visit them and observe with my own eyes the work of Bruce Converse, which she so enthusiastically described. Upon the second urging I went. The chateau she occupied on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau made an excellent setting for her, harmonizing well with the repose of her character and the serenity of her beauty.

I had barely arrived before she insisted upon my going with her to see the painting Converse was finishing in the forest near the chateau. With Madame Worthing, who, I soon discovered, fully shared her daughter's admiration for Converse, we set out on foot along a small path in the woods. We talked of Eleanor—they had received no direct news from her or Mrs. Crackenby, but De Volney, who had been at the chateau several times, had had two or three letters from Signor Tonnelli and I had had two letters from Eleanor herself, all speaking of the progress she was making

under her new master. We talked also of De Volney and Paris, but the conversation was almost altogether about Bruce Converse. Why must we be of little minds? Madame Pointer's unstinted praise of the young painter, her undisguised interest in him, caused the suspicion to leap into my mind for the first time that her attachment to his art might mask a deeper attachment for the artist. It was a base thought, unworthy of her and of me, but where is the philosopher who can so close all the doors of his mind that an unwelcome thought will not at times come leaping in before he is aware?

The newer work of Bruce Converse certainly justified all that had been said. It was stronger, surer, maturer, and I found this change reflected in the young man. We came upon him perched on one of those big rocks that are scattered through the forest, painting the effect of sunlight upon some young birches. He greeted us with delight, giving me a hearty handshake, and then went on painting, talking as he worked.

"The work seems to fly down here," he said. "Remember that day we came down in your motor? I did not think then I should have a whole summer of it, but my good friends declare they aren't tired of me and I'm staying on." He turned round to smile at Madame Pointer and Madame Worthing. I learned he intended to go to New York in the fall, and hoped to have an exhibition there of the pictures he was now painting. He asked about Eleanor, was eager to know all I could tell him. "She hasn't written me," he said; "but I suppose she is too busy to write."

It was a very charming week end that I spent with Madame Pointer and her mother and Bruce Converse, and there was a return visit that I shall long remember when Madame Pointer and Madame Worthing did me the honor to come to my chateau. Bruce Converse was so deep in his work that he could not leave, but De Volney, who had been with me for a week, made one of the pleasant party. Not in many years have I seen the old place when it was more beautiful. The summer had

passed and Nature was entering upon her loveliest stage, that season of full maturity just before the autumn puts over all the master touch of color. But now there was no hint in reddened leaf or yellow grass of decay to instil the melancholy suggestion that all things must fade. The elms and oaks stood in their green fields so richly clothed it seemed they must remain forever as they were.

Madame Pointer expressed herself as enchanted. She was much out of doors, and when in the old house appeared to find an equal pleasure in exploring the great galleries, some of them gloomy enough. The day before they departed I took her entirely over the chateau from the damp *cave* to the roof upon which knights had ridden their steeds in olden days. Madame Worthing and De Volney had declared the excursion too fatiguing for them and they had remained behind, but Madame Pointer showed not once a sign of weariness. I pointed out to her that door before which my great ancestor, the old Philippe de Saint-Sauveur, had stood with drawn sword defying the emissaries of the wicked regent, Queen Catherine, who wished to take from him his young wife, her cousin.

"Go to the Queen," he said, "and tell her that my bride rests in this room, but before the door stands Philippe de Saint-Sauveur; and say to her that whoever would enter this room may, but first he must pass through Heaven or Hell on the point of my sword, that his soul may be purified before it comes into the presence of my wife."

Madame Pointer looked long at me as I stood there where my great ancestor had stood and told her the story.

"And did the old prince keep his young bride?" she asked.

"He did, madame, and she was happy. I am the last of their blood."

"How you must love this old place!" she exclaimed.

"Every stone," I answered proudly. "Were it possible for them to become more dear to me, they have become so this day because you have touched them." She smiled at me and was

silent during the rest of our excursion.

The next day they were gone, all together, for Bertrand took himself off with them, though I urged him to stay longer.

"You are too melancholy here in your lonely state for me, Florimond," he had answered laughingly, and I began to think he might be right.

I was not slow in accepting the next invitation of Madame Pointer, but I regret now that I went, for I found among the party that detestable Duc de Mirabelle, who gave himself the airs of an old friend and followed Madame Pointer everywhere. For the life of me I could not be civil to him, and I left for my home a day earlier than I had intended, conscious that I had acquitted myself rather badly. From that time on nothing could drag me from my chateau, and to Madame Pointer's two letters again inviting me I replied evasively, for I knew I could not keep my temper should I again encounter that adventurer in her presence.

It was early in October that I received from Paris a letter in which Madame Pointer informed me she was sailing the next day for America with her mother and Mr. Converse. The exhibition of his paintings had been arranged and would be held during the winter. Her letter was enthusiastic in its prophecies of his success, and at the end was a word of farewell that deeply touched me.

"Somehow, this time my going seems a most serious undertaking," she wrote. "I feel in quitting Paris more than I have ever felt before that I am leaving behind good friends and putting a wide ocean between us. But I try to banish regret by thinking of my return. We plan to be here in the spring. I am sorry not to have seen you again to say good-bye and to thank you once more for those perfect days at your home. I feel that I have insufficiently expressed my gratitude for all you have done to make this visit to France the most enjoyable I have yet known, but take the intention for the deed, my good friend, and know that I shall not soon forget your kindness. *Au revoir et merci!* The

Vicomte de Volney once told me that expression was perilously near slang, but I cannot bring myself to write 'Good-bye,' and I must thank you."

There was nothing to take me back to Paris, so that I remained in the country until after the New Year, shut up for the most time in the house before a log fire, for it was cold and rainy. I never remember such a winter. Paris, when at last I returned to it, was as gray as a monk's cowl. It rained or snowed nearly every day, more snow than I can recall since the winters of my boyhood when it seemed there was always snow. The sun shone rarely, and if it peeped for a moment from between the gray curtains people looked at it in wonder. I rarely went farther from my home than the *quais*, where I would talk with the shivering old *bouquinistes* who stood in front of their bookstalls like starved birds waiting before their cages for someone to come and feed them.

Bertrand de Volney astonished me by going to America. He would have had me go with him but the journey was too long. He wished to see the exhibition of Bruce Converse, and he wrote me long letters of the success that the pictures were having, sending me clippings from the newspapers that would have been enough to turn Converse's head. He was being hailed as the greatest of American painters. Indeed, echoes of Converse's success reached me through the *Figaro*, the *Herald* and through a long appreciative article in the *Revue des Arts*. I had several letters, too, from Madame Pointer, recounting the same things and giving me entertaining details of her life in America. She wrote most interesting letters.

And then, just as the long winter was at its end and a belated spring was turning the world green again, came the joyous news that they were returning to Paris.

XI

ELEANOR MOORE—our Eleanor—was to make her *début* at a great gala evening at the Opera, and before a visiting sovereign, during the Grande Semaine.

Only the magician Tonnelli could have brought such a thing to pass. Only he, who moved with such quickness and sureness, could have decided and made the others decide to trust the success of so important an event to a young girl who had never sung in public before. Ah, but had she not? The truth came out about that much later, but then it was Eleanor's secret, Eleanor's and Signor Tonnelli's, and, of course, Mrs. Crackenby's; only they knew that, under another name, she had sung in the opera houses of Madrid and Rome and Milan, yes, even that very part of Juliette which she was to sing before the King.

You who know the self-satisfied critics of Paris can imagine how hostile they were when it was announced that, without so much as consulting them, an unknown singer had been chosen. It was not to be permitted. They would have torn her to little pieces with their sharp pens. Was she Italian? Was she Spanish? Was she one of those Americans? No one knew. That was the very trouble. She was *unknown*. The enraged critics attacked the management of the Opera, and each critic having in mind the prima donna he would have preferred for such an honor, waged a warfare that extended at last to the politicians, who, alas, so often take part in the affairs of our unhappy Opera. They said one thing was certain: the new singer was *not* French, and the occasion demanded that the King should be entertained not only by a French prima donna but by the greatest prima donna France could offer. The King was known all over Europe as a patron of music; if the gala night were a failure he would cherish a just resentment, yes, he would quite properly be offended, and the consequences might be serious, for delicate questions were pending with the government of that sovereign; France might suffer.

It was thus they argued, and one polemist was so scurrilous in his attacks upon Eleanor that I was on the point of sending my witnesses to the offender, but the Vicomte de Volney got ahead of me and neatly ran his sword through the scribbler's right arm, so that he did not

write with much comfort for a long time after.

Opposed to all the politicians and the critics was little Signor Tonnelli, and little Signor Tonnelli was very happy. The critics angrily demanded of him information concerning his protégée, but, smiling, he refused. "She is the mos' wonderful singer of today. Tonnelli tell you so. You will yourself say so." That is all he would say to them. They asked for more. "Is it not enough?" he inquired, still smiling.

The directors of the Opera hid behind Tonnelli. They would never have admitted it, but it was true that he could have taken away from them their best singers. They did not tell this, but said they trusted to the judgment of Signor Tonnelli, whose fame as an impresario was known even to the King himself.

Poor Eleanor! During all this time she was forced to hide herself. I received a note from her that had been sent from Saint-Germain. I went to see her at once. She was in a villa overlooking the valley of the Seine. It was Mrs. Crackenby who betrayed the most emotion.

"I am expecting every day to find the French army at the gate," she avowed.

Eleanor was changed. I cannot tell you how except that some of that boyishness seemed to have departed. She was exceedingly calm. The storming of the critics, the curiosity of the public seemed not to affect her.

"Signor Tonnelli tells us but little," she explained, "and Aunt Ella does not dare to grapple with the French newspapers, but, notwithstanding, we have heard something of the threats they are making against poor Signor Tonnelli. It would be terrible if he were worried by them, but he does not mind them at all."

She did not appear sad, but the gaiety that was formerly in her smile was no longer there, and though she was a little slenderer and that made her seem even younger, in her conversation and in her conduct she appeared considerably older than when she went away. With no trace of embarrassment she asked about Bruce Converse. He was in Paris, she

had heard. How was he doing? She had been told that he had had great success in America; she had received several letters from him while he was there, and she had read some of the highly laudatory notices of the critics in regard to his work exhibited in the Old Salon in the spring.

"Would you like me to give him your address?" I asked, with the intention of discovering if this frankness were indifference or merely the concealment of a deep interest.

"No, no," she said so quickly that she blushed in trying to regain her former attitude of tranquillity. "I think he has it already," she confessed. "I wrote him from Italy that this villa had been taken for us, but he must be very busy. Besides, I have not the time myself to see many friends, for I must work hard every day, and when I am not working I must rest. Signor Ton-nelli makes me follow a very strict régime. Really, I am a prisoner in a cage."

"And Bertrand de Volney?" I asked.

"Yes, I must see 'Is 'Ighness." She smiled at the old name that hardly anyone used now. I had not heard it for nearly a year and had almost forgotten it. "I intended to ask you to beg him to come out here to see me."

"And Madame Pointer?" I suggested.

She shook her head. "Not yet. After my début. You will explain to her, will you not? She will understand. I really would prefer to wait until afterward."

Now there was something in all this that eluded me, that baffled my desire to analyze it, and yet it left me far from convinced that Eleanor Moore was as tranquil as she appeared. My conscience troubled me, and when Bertrand had been to see her I went to him to unburden my mind.

"See here, Bertrand," I began at once, "now that you have seen her, do you think that she is still in love?"

"Do women unhappily in love talk so freely of him who has caused their suffering?" he asked.

"I have known women," I answered, "and, indeed, you have also, undoubtedly, who forced themselves to face

boldly their chagrin, and who would not let themselves hide the subject that was painful to them. I have known other women who fed upon their martyrdom, as it were, voluntarily turning the knife in the wound."

De Volney smiled confidently. He put his hands in his pockets and stood up before me. "Let your conscience rest quietly, Florimond. If Miss Moore is in love, it is with an idea, not with Bruce Converse, for the Bruce Converse of the studio in the Rue d'Assas whom she knew hardly exists any more. It was another Bruce Converse who came back from America. If you are not convinced I am right you should go to see him; it is really your duty to go, for you have not called upon him since he returned."

It was true. I had seen the young painter several times at Madame Pointer's, and we had had *déjeuner* together—Converse, Bertrand and I—but I had not been to see him in the new studio he had rented in the Parc Monceau quarter. So I went. There were two ladies in the studio when I arrived. Converse presented me. They were American ladies, evidently recent acquaintances, and they talked of his pictures, standing before them and repeating those phrases persons who know little of art employ, phrases that seem to express so much and mean nothing. Converse accepted their flattery politely, but I think he was glad when they left.

"Prospective purchasers," he explained, with just a touch of sarcasm. He was wearing his painter's blouse, and once we were alone he took up his palette and brushes again and resumed his painting where he had been interrupted by the arrival of his visitors.

"You don't mind my going on working. Sit here where you can see it. How do you like it? Tell me what you think of it. I can listen and talk and paint, too."

We talked of many things. Yes, De Volney was right, as he nearly always was. Bruce Converse had changed. He had grown very sure of himself. He knew quite well now what he wanted to do and he intended to do it; there was

no troubling question of possible failure. Purposely I brought the name of Eleanor into our conversation, mentioning that I had paid her a visit. Converse stopped his painting suddenly.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Is she here? I got a letter from her from Italy saying that she and her aunt were to arrive in a fortnight to take a villa somewhere—somewhere—where was it?" He searched his memory. I did not aid him. He laid aside his palette and began rummaging in an inlaid mahogany desk that went very well with the luxuriousness of the new studio. "Ah, here it is." He glanced at the date. "May twenty-eighth; what day is it now? June twentieth. By Jove! I had no idea it had been so long. How time flies when one is busy!" He was reading the letter. "Ah! 'Aunt Ella and I have taken a villa in Saint-Germain. We expect to be there in two weeks or less.' Here is the address. I must go to see them at once. I had no idea they had arrived."

He did in fact go, not the next day but the day after, but I learned that he had sacrificed his time to small purpose, for at the end of the long journey he found only Mrs. Crackenby. Eleanor was not at home.

"*Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*" is one of the oldest and perhaps the truest of proverbs. Fortunate are we if, even after the lapse of a short time, we can find our friends and circumstances the same as when they so delighted us. I had looked forward to another summer of pleasant, congenial, amusing company such as the last summer had been, but it was quite different. Converse and Eleanor were not the only ones who had changed. Even Potts and Judd and Tuttle showed the marks of the year that had passed. They were no longer "afflicted with too much Trilby"; their costumes had become almost like the costumes of other mortals; Tuttle had exhibited a very successful picture in the Salon des Beaux Arts; Judd had been no less successful with a painting of the sea at Concarneau which had won him a third medal in the Old Salon; Potts was an out-and-out

"*Indépendant*" and retained in his manner of dress a reminiscence of former eccentricity, but he was still very young and it was more than probable that he would change with time as the others had changed. Thus the three friends who had bound themselves with an oath never to part company had gone their separate ways in the broad field of art.

Madame Pointer had not changed, but circumstances had changed around her. She was the same supremely lovely person she had always been; indeed, I think she was one of those rare beings who approach so close to perfection that they attain something of that unchangeableness we associate with unworldly things. No, she had not changed, but her occupations and interests were no longer exactly the same. She had taken a place in town, a sunny, inviting apartment at the entrance to the Avenue du Bois, the first house to the left, and there I often had the pleasure of seeing her and her mother, Mrs. Worthing, who was again with her; but there was no longer a plot on foot to unite our interests or to render an excuse for very frequent visits. There was no plot because there was no longer any need for plotting. All of us, I think, felt that our part had been done and well done. Not that she was any the less interested in the careers of Bruce Converse and Eleanor; I believe she was even more so, but they were both now so far advanced on the road to success that we were no longer in a position to help them.

"How splendidly it has turned out!" Madame Pointer said to me on one occasion when we were alone. "It was the Vicomte de Volney's plot, of course, but I think we all have reason to feel pleased and proud."

She had many friends in the city, and was occupied a great deal with them, but she had by no means forgotten her friends of the summer before. With characteristic loyalty she had planned a reunion of those friends on the evening Eleanor would make her debut at the Opera. She had engaged three *loges*, and we gained much pleasure in going

over the list of those she wished to be her guests.

"You must look up those three interesting boys from the Latin Quarter," she said to me. "It would not do for them not to be there, and I have written Spaulding Knapp urging him to leave his business and come over. He never disappoints me, so we can count upon him. Mr. Converse will be with us, of course, and you and the Vicomte de Volney; and I have written to Signor Tonelli, or rather I got the Vicomte de Volney to write, asking him and Miss Moore and her aunt to join us after her part of the performance. It will be a real reunion."

You see, she had not changed. She was always thinking of how to give pleasure to others, inspired by unselfishness and charity, two of the noblest virtues a woman can possess.

It was this quality of charity that was imposed upon by that miserable Mirabelle. Madame Pointer, who would not have wounded the feelings of anyone, continued to receive him, and, presuming upon this, he had squirmed himself into a position of apparent friendship with her, calling at her home oftener than ever. I had said all that I could say on the subject, but that this scheming, ingratiating snake of a man was allowed to crawl into her saintly presence enraged me. I determined not to speak to Bertrand about it, for he would have been quick to take the matter into his own hands, but I decided to find a way in which to rid her of his attentions. The opportunity came in good season.

XII

It was at Auteuil on the day of the Prix des Drags. I had desired to escort Madame Pointer to witness this race, which to my mind is the most delightful of all our races, but I learned with regret that she was already engaged for the day. I was standing with Bertrand and another friend, the Marquis de Villejust, watching the brilliant scene, regarding with interest the many mail coaches arrive, when the well

known four grays of a very wealthy American gentleman swung into the field by us. On the second seat was Madame Pointer looking more beautiful than I had ever seen her. By her side was that insupportable Duc de Mirabelle.

Madame Pointer recognized us and bowed, and we lifted our hats, but I turned away quickly, for that Mirabelle was bowing, too, and smiling with incredible familiarity. The knowledge that it was this upstart who had robbed me of the pleasure of showing our Prix des Drags to Madame Pointer was more than I could endure tranquilly. I was still in this mood when the man himself, with his unfailing effrontery, appeared before me smiling triumphantly.

"I say, my dear Prince," he began, with an affected drawl, "our good friend, Madame Pointer, tells me this wonderful new singer we are to hear at the Opera tomorrow night and of whom all Paris is talking is a great friend of yours, indeed, something of a protégée. Do tell us about her—unless"—he paused, feigning an embarrassment foreign to his character—"unless I am asking something indiscreet."

His familiarity, the public proclamation of Madame Pointer as his friend and the insinuation of his last words sent a red hot iron of indignation through me. "Monsieur de Mirabelle"—and I regarded him with cold contempt, declining as I had always done to accord him the title he assumed—"if the charity of American ladies causes them to tolerate your insolence, it is not so with gentlemen of France. There can be no question concerning my friends that I wish to discuss with you."

I must confess the adventurer played his game with a high hand. He drew himself up to his full stature. "Perhaps a discussion of another nature, where our steel can speak a common language, would be more agreeable to Monsieur de Saint-Sauveur. You shall not lack your opportunity to decide."

Lifting his hat ceremoniously to those with me, he left us, and, as if to add to his affront, was soon again on

the coach talking gaily to Madame Pointer. I made no doubt I should soon receive his seconds, and I requested Bertrand and the Marquis de Villejust to act for me, urging them to expedite the affair as much as possible, for, as Bertrand was aware, I wished the matter, which was sure to get out, to be settled before Eleanor's début the next evening. It was arranged that afternoon that we should meet early the next morning on the property of the Marquis de Villejust in the Vallée de Chevreuse.

The sun had just risen when I rode away from my home with the Vicomte de Volney. Old Gaspard suspected what was up, I am sure, for he was very nervous and more than usually solemn.

"God guard my master," he said as we drove off.

Mirabelle was on the ground when we arrived. We lost no time in removing our coats for the encounter at arms. When I saw him standing there, still insolent in his self-possession, I determined that I would use my skill to inflict upon him such a humiliation as would take from him some of this assurance. From the time I was able to handle a rapier I had been devoted to the practice of *l'escrime*, and confident of my superiority over this upstart, I felt certain that once we crossed swords and he felt himself at my mercy his attitude of arrogance and bluff would disappear and he would show himself the craven.

No sooner had the *directeur de combat* placed us at the regulation distance and released our swords with "*Alles, messieurs*," than I advanced toward my adversary with a violent twist in *seconde*. I expected that Mirabelle would at once fall back, which is what I wished, for I did not desire to wound him until after I had humiliated him by demonstrating how completely I was his master; but, contrary to what I had planned, he very neatly avoided my blade by an instinctive movement and remained firmly in his place. The point of his sword entered in my right forearm.

Immediately came the cry of

"*Haltel*" from the *directeur de combat*, and the surgeons sprang forward to examine my wound. It was a long gash; the blade had penetrated deeply, but by a lucky chance the artery had not been touched. The surgeons were for declaring the encounter at an end, asserting that my wound placed me in a state of inferiority, but I insisted upon proceeding. I had exchanged a few words with De Volney, and he seconded my desire, for he knew as well as I did that I had received my wound through my own imprudence.

When once again I faced Mirabelle I was more cautious, for I realized that I had done him at least the injustice of supposing he knew nothing of swordsmanship. I must confess this adventurer carried things off well on the field. His attitude was most correct, and I was aware that, whatever his shortcomings, I had before me a practised *escrimeur*, calm, vigorous and courageous. His coolness excited my admiration, but the thought came to me that undoubtedly it was this very quality that had enabled him to win his way into Madame Pointer's graces, and the reflection fired my hate with increased ardor.

We fell on guard again and I waited for his attack, sure that his first success would lead him to take the offensive. I had judged rightly, for indeed he marched directly on me. I waited—waited for that moment I knew would come when his arm would shoot out to its full length. In an instant the thing was done. Out shot his arm. As soon as his blade was well within reach of mine I made a rapid beat in tierce and thrust straight. My sword passed below his arm and entered his breast.

At the cry of "*Haltel*" he fell back and the blood left his face. It was a serious wound I had given him. He tried to hold himself erect as the surgeons made their examination, but the pain was too great, and he tottered and would have fallen had not his seconds supported him.

Thus ended the affair. My own wound was bleeding profusely. The surgeons came to dress it before I de-

parted. They held a consultation apart, and came forward as I was leaving to caution me to keep to my bed for several days, as they feared that any excitement or exposure might induce a fever. It was most annoying. I was beside myself with vexation, for Eleanor was to sing that night at the Opera and all the world would be there.

Before Bertrand and I reached my home I was surprised to discover that my arm was giving me a good deal of pain. He left me in charge of Gaspard, who was ridiculously solicitous, while he went in person to send my physician. I was not sorry to lie down for a time, and I did not protest when the doctor came and administered an opiate which sent me quickly into a disturbed slumber. It seemed to me I had been sleeping only a moment when I was awakened and saw Gaspard peeping in at the door and trying to be as quiet as a cat.

"Can't you keep out of here, you old grandmother?" I exclaimed, amused in spite of myself.

"*Pardon—pardon*," he murmured, approaching and holding forth a letter.

Did I really in the half-light of my shaded chamber recognize that handwriting, or was it the spirit that seemed to emanate from that which had been in her presence that made me know the letter was from Madame Pointer?

"Throw back the curtains," I commanded, and eagerly with my free hand tore open the envelope.

I may not reveal to you the sentiments she expressed about myself that were far beyond all my possible deserving. De Volney had told her of the duel and its outcome. She had wept when she thought that through her my life had been exposed to danger; she knew that what had been done had been solely to protect her, and she blamed herself that she had not heeded my warnings. But not until now had she realized that my dislike of Mirabelle was more than temperamental; she would never see him again.

My face must have betrayed the pleasure her letter gave me, for I looked up to see Gaspard, whose presence I

had forgotten, regarding me, his face wreathed with smiles. I smiled in turn, for never before had he presented me a letter from Madame Pointer with such a cheerful countenance.

"Go to Madame Pointer's house at once," I commanded. "Make to her my profound excuses that my trifling accident prevents me from writing, but say that, without fail, I shall have the pleasure of seeing her at the Opera tonight."

"*Mais—m-m-mais*," he began, stammering as he tried to make some observation.

"Go," I ordered sternly, "and lose no time."

XIII

WITH difficulty I dressed that evening, inwardly chafing that I must appear at the Opera with my arm *en écharpe*. I was late in arriving, but the gala program had been arranged to have the great act from "Sanson et Dalila" precede Eleanor's début in the first act of "Roméo et Juliette," and the Russian dancers, who were then so much in favor, come after her, so I knew that, though I was late, I was early enough for my purpose. Several others were just arriving when I mounted the great marble stairway, several women in exquisite cloaks accompanied by men in uniform or displaying their decorations. We passed through the lines of cuirassiers *en grande tenue*, and already I could feel the excitement and expectancy in the atmosphere.

An obsequious *ouvreuse* opened for me the door of Madame Pointer's *loge*, and I slipped in with an extreme quietness, for that wonderful aria was being sung. Saint-Saëns himself was directing the orchestra. I could distinguish his massive head in the darkened theater. I saw the silhouettes of Madame Pointer, De Volney and Bruce Converse, and could tell they were turning toward me in greeting. Madame Pointer rose silently, and I knew that she was holding out her hand to me. Awkwardly with my left hand I groped for hers until our fingers touched. She allowed her hand to rest in mine as she led me in the semi-darkness to the back of the *loge*.

"Are you really only slightly hurt?" she whispered. "Was it wise to venture here tonight?"

I reassured her. "Believe me, your note wrought the miracle of a cure." And it was true; the pain in my arm was gone.

We continued to talk together in a low tone so that our voices should not disturb the others. I felt rather than observed the intensity of her emotions as she spoke. Never had she seen such a brilliant audience; it was like some wonderful *répétition générale* for which everyone had been waiting. The King and his suite and the President of France had arrived, and were in the *loge d'honneur* not far from us. All the diplomatic corps were present, the principal Paris notabilities and many visiting celebrities. De Volney had pointed them out to her. She spoke of Converse.

"His mood is of the strangest; he has scarcely spoken," she whispered, her voice a-quiver with apprehension, which I attributed to the tension she was under. "Twice he has said he must leave, and it has been all I could do to persuade him to remain. He seems beside himself with excitement, and terribly depressed."

I glanced toward the front of the box. The fine features of Bruce Converse were outlined against the light, but I could gain no information from them. I observed, however, that his hands were not still, and that he was continually clasping and unclasping them.

Madame Pointer was worried. "His mood has communicated itself to me," she confessed. "I feel frightfully uneasy. I am so glad you have come. I wish Spaulding Knapp were here, too. He cabled me he would come, but he has not arrived."

The curtain was descending; the lights were on, and from all parts of the house came the spontaneous, hearty applause of an audience in good humor with itself. It augured well for Eleanor.

As if unable longer to endure inaction, Converse rose from his place, and without waiting to see Saint-Saëns and his interpreters bow their acknowledgments

to those in the royal box, he left us, swinging out of the *loge* without even a muttered apology. I followed his athletic figure until it passed out of the door. I looked at Madame Pointer. "You see?" her eyes seemed to say.

"Natural excitement; nothing more," I said reassuringly, but my own mind was filled with misgiving.

"He is merely feeling what we all feel tonight; only he betrays it more than we," said De Volney, and he began quickly pointing out to Madame Pointer's attention celebrities in the audience until he got her interested in the wonderful scene spread out before us. De Volney, who, I believe, knew everyone in Paris, was still at this occupation when the *ouvreuse* opened the door of our *loge* and Mr. Spaulding Knapp entered.

"Our steamer was held up by fog," he explained as he greeted us all. This surprising man had engaged a special train to bring him to Paris. As I thought of the commotion his order must have caused to the functionaries of the government railroad, I laughed in spite of myself. "How very American!" I could not help remarking.

"The train wasn't, believe me," chuckled Mr. Knapp. "If it had been I should have arrived for the opening, but I am glad I am not too late." He turned to Madame Pointer. "I imagine you knew, Leslie, when you sent for me, that I would not disappoint you."

She looked up at him gratefully. "You have never disappointed me yet, Spaulding," she answered approvingly. "And never will, God helping me," replied this American business man quite fervently.

"What is the matter with Converse?" suddenly asked Mr. Knapp of the Vicomte de Volney. "I passed him in the foyer and he hardly spoke to me."

"Oh, everyone is excited tonight," answered Bertrand carelessly, but Madame Pointer informed Mr. Knapp of her apprehension. "I really fear he is not well. He has twice threatened to leave. It would be a pity for him to miss Eleanor's debut."

"I'll go and get him," announced Mr.

Knapp, departing immediately on his errand.

Into that vast amphitheater directly below and before us and into the *loges* on every side and above people were returning, impatient for the curtain to rise again and let them behold the new star. Men had stood in the stalls and gazed their full upon the brilliant company; everyone had stared at the King; acquaintances and friends had met in the foyer and congratulated each other on the good fortune of being present on such a night; but now they wished the real performance to begin. The lights were down again and the orchestra had begun that brief overture before the opening scene when Mr. Knapp returned. With him was Converse, and they took seats behind us.

Silence had fallen upon the audience like a cloak that hid it from our sight. So still was it that one could not hear the breathing of humanity or the rustling of dresses and fans; it was as still as the earth on a summer day before a storm, and through the heavy atmosphere of the theater ran electric currents that sent a tingling tremor through those that silently waited. Was there to be a storm? Would those who had so bitterly criticized carry their warfare even to this place? Were they waiting there, in that hidden mass of humanity, ready to tear to pieces with their cries and hisses the soul of this young, untried girl if she failed in the slightest, if she uttered a single false note? Ah, those who knew the venom of thwarted critics and politicians were aware that it would be so.

Slowly the curtain went up and glasses were leveled to get the first glimpse of this Mlle. Elenori none of them had ever seen before. In the middle of the row of singers behind the curtain of gauze that veils those who recite the brief prologue of "*Roméo et Juliette*" sat Eleanor, the masses of her waving dark hair falling about her shoulders. So young she looked, so frail, so calm with the unquestioning trust of youth, her eyes wide open, gazing innocently before her—and then the opening chorus:

*Verone vit jadis deux familles rivales,
Les Montagues, les Capulets.*

Over all was heard that high soprano, true and pure and fresh, a young girl singing, pouring out melody from an unsullied heart; a young girl whose love must, by fate's unreasoning decree, end in the tomb, love that came unsought—

Qui vivent naitre leurs amours.

The chorus was ended. Already the house was noisy with applause. Above the clapping of hands came a sibilant hissing, but it was not in disapproval of Eleanor. It was from those who, with tears in their eyes because of the pathos of it all and because of their emotion, frowned upon others who could break the spell with noisy demonstration. As yet the audience had beheld Eleanor's beauty concealed in part by that curtain of gauze—oh, the wise cunning of Signor Tonnelli!—and now they were impatient for the next scene when she would appear in the ballroom and they would see her in the full, brilliant light. Even the leader of the orchestra seemed anxious to hasten through the opening bars of the introduction, for the musicians played it much too fast.

"It will be a triumph for her; she has conquered them," whispered Madame Pointer, her voice uneven from emotion.

De Volney smiled at her excess of enthusiasm, for the prophecy was born of friendship and Eleanor had as yet had no opportunity. "It is too early," he said. "We must not be too sure; we must wait at least until she has sung the waltz."

"No, Leslie, you are right," broke in that astonishing Mr. Knapp, who had moved his chair quite close to Madame Pointer. "The girl has already won. There is something in an audience that a person can feel when it is ready to throw itself at the feet of a singer. It's the same way in a convention or on the Stock Exchange during an exciting day. You can't put your hand on what it is; you can't describe it; but you can feel it, and it is here tonight. I tell you, the

girl has already won, and she deserves it." Eleanor was on the stage again. A distinct indrawing of the breath in pleasurable satisfaction had greeted her entrance, and over the auditorium ran a ripple of encouraging applause.

Ecoutez! Ecoutez!

C'est le son des instruments joyeux.

No young girl whose budding womanhood exhaled as a perfume the joy of life could have more sweetly expressed the rapture that is born of the gay music of the dance. The audience seemed to enter into ecstasy. She stood there graceful, animated, expectant. With a slender, unjeweled hand she put back the dark masses of hair from her shoulders, exposing her white, rounded neck, round which was a single strand of pearls. I shall see her always in my memory thus standing, her marvelous dress of gold-embroidered silken velvet, green-white like the spray of the sea reflecting a shimmer of light, like a cloth of gold seen beneath a wave; on her dark hair rested an embroidered headdress that gave her the suggestion of boyishness that was so lovable.

When she reappeared with Gertrude, the old nurse, the teasing smile that played upon her full lips emphasized this characteristic. Yes, Tonnelli was the wisest of men: she was not acting the part of Juliette—she *was* Juliette. It was as if she did not realize that she was upon a stage and that this was her debut before the world's severest critics: And then she launched into that wonderful arietta:

Je veux vivre

Dans le rêve qui m'enivre.

It has been my good fortune to hear many Juliettes, and I make bold to say that never before or since has Gounod's wonderful waltz been so sung. In the original key of G in which the master wrote it, that high, clear voice, round and sweet as a bird's, fresh and pure and new as springtime with the flowers in blossom, poured forth the melodious notes of the waltz, "singing," as says your great poet, Keats, "in full-throated ease," until it seemed the music one heard could come from no human throat,

but must be the rapturous expression of some unembodied spirit caroling its joy. One thought of life without death, of love without parting, of gladness without sorrow.

The song had ended, but still its echo remained in the jubilant violins that caught up and repeated the rhythmic refrain. Upon the throng was laid a spell of silence. Wondering, enrapt, with eyes still fastened upon the singer, the great audience sat motionless as if fearing to break the spell too soon and lose one precious moment of a sensation that could never again be experienced. Not until the last note had died away did the applause come. Was it one voice or was it many in unison that first shouted that deep, imperious "Bravo"? It seemed to be one commanding voice. Then, as if that cry had been a signal for which the others were waiting, the clamor was let loose.

"Bravo! Bravo!" The multitude was screaming its expression of delight. Unison had fled. Each individual was striving to be heard.

"Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!" The shrill voices of women mingled with the deep tones of men, and their higher notes of frantic acclaim were borne aloft, the sound vibrating against the lofty, painted dome.

"Bravo! Bravo! Elenor!" The chorus took up her name, the name Tonnelli had given her. Men had leaped to their feet and were wildly waving programs and hats. Like the rolling of drums beating a cacophonous accompaniment was the wild, unmeasured clapping together of many palms. The King was standing with both hands outstretched in applause.

Upon the stage stood Juliette, her lips trembling as bravely the boyish, innocent smile struggled to overcome the tears. In my own eyes was a mist that blurred my sight of her and a hot hand seemed pressed upon my throat.

The crowd had taken up another cry. "*Bis! Bis!*" it was shouting, and in an instant the whole house was ringing with the word. De Volney turned suddenly as if in appeal to me. His face was white, and he, who was forever so

calm, was trembling with excitement. "No!" he shouted in protest, making a trumpet of his hands, his words barely reaching me above the tumult. "They can't mean to ask her to sing it again—that song and in that key! It will be too much for her! It is cruel!"

For answer I pointed to the clamoring, unsatisfied, excited throng below us. "They will not be denied," I answered, but I doubt if he heard, for he was leaning from the *loge* shouting to the crowd: "*Non! Non! C'est trop!*" I caught him by the arm. He might as well have tried to stop the flowing of the Seine when it is in flood.

Eleanor could no longer keep back the tears. That happiness which knows no other full expression had forced them from their hiding place that they might be witnesses of this memorable hour. She heard the insistent demand that the song be sung again. That demand of "*Bis!*" had swept up to her like the notes of trumpets, and she turned timidly smiling toward the wings where Signor Tonnelli was standing, stroking his beard nervously, with his little sharp eyes dancing as he looked upon his singer. He nodded to her approvingly and waved his hand in consent to the director of the orchestra.

Again the violins took up the strain and Eleanor was singing, and the house was as hushed and still as if no tumult had passed over it. The storm had gone by, and there was calm again with sunshine and the birds singing and all the air filled with melody as each one dreamed his own dream to the music of that crystal pure young voice. If in my heart there had been fear for her when she began, it vanished as the round, full notes, clear and high and true, poured forth in a golden shower as free and unrestrained as summer rain. It seemed as if the voice were not of her or of any earthly creature, but of some divine being, whose very soul was music and who sang without conscious effort because she had been created for singing.

This time the crowds did not wait for the concluding violins. At the last note of the singer men were on their feet shouting as in a delirium of joy. There

was no curbing them. I expected to see them rush upon the stage and bear the singer off in triumph.

"Elenori! Elenori!" they shouted. "*Bis! Bis!*" The orchestra tried to play, and its music was drowned by the cheers of the audience. Inconsiderately, madly, insistently, men and women were demanding that song again. De Volney, leaning from his *loge*, was screaming to that maddened throng to be still, and I and others nearby joined in his effort. I looked back at Madame Pointer. She sat with her hands to her face, weeping, and that amazing Mr. Spaulding Knapp stood by her, gazing upon the crowd, outwardly as calm as ever, but his teeth were clenched hard together and his face was set. The sight of Bruce Converse bending forward near him startled me. The artist's eyes were turned away from the scene, but I could see that his face was contorted. Even as I looked I saw his powerful body tremble as with a convulsion, and he staggered out of the door of the *loge*.

From the wings out upon the stage came Signor Tonnelli, a strange little figure in his black coat. He held up a hand for silence. Men recognized him and ceased their clamor to hear what he might say.

"*Mesdames et messieurs,*" he began in that quaint accent of his, a good-humored smile accompanying his words, "the opera you have forgot all about, but he is not finish'. You will have the pleasure to hear Mademoiselle Elenori sing again. I am only an impresario, that is all, but I should be a verra bad impresario indeed if I let a young girl sing three times that arietta which your divine *maestro*, Gounod, wrote in that key, just, I think, to try the voices of singers. I am verra sure you think so, too, and, no, you will not ask it, eh?"

The crowd was laughing, brought back to its senses. "Bravo, Tonnelli!" men cried as the little magician bowed and walked off the stage, waving, when he reached the wings, a signal for the orchestra to begin.

From that time on there never was an audience so pleased with itself. Really, it was amusing; each one seemed to

consider that it was he or she who had discovered in Mlle. Elenori one of the world's great singers. When she sang that duet with Roméo it was no longer a Juliette who sang to them; it was their Juliette. In that exciting moment when Juliette learns that the stranger who has won her heart is the mortal enemy of her race, her girlish fright and dismay seemed less portrayed than real.

"*La haine est le berceau de cet amour fatal,*"

she sang tremblingly, and one could see that those who listened were deeply troubled for her, so completely had she won them.

Of that scene which followed the curtain's fall my unpractised pen cannot write. It is a matter of the history of the Opera of Paris. Perhaps you were there and saw and heard it all for yourself. Perhaps, already, you have seen through the thin disguise of names; perhaps indeed long before this you have recognized those whom I have tried to veil with a romancer's cloak, for I am but little of an artist and must be content with telling of things as they were. If you were there I know well that you have shared with me that longing to live over again those sublime moments when a young girl stood before that adoring, madly cheering throng, the "fair song-conjured dream" of the great world of Paris. Not one soul in all that multitude but wished to testify to the exquisite joy that she had given; not one person that was not standing, proclaiming the name of Elenori. From the tiers of *loges* leaned jeweled women who tore flowers from their dresses and scattered them over the unheeding, shouting throng in the effort to offer the fragrant tributes to the object of their adoration.

I saw the King call to his side an aide-de-camp and cry something in his ear, and the man immediately departed.

XIV

Of that part of this history which follows I shall tell you as if I had been present, though, thanks to the *bon Dieu*, I was not, and only afterward learned of it.

The King had sent for Eleanor. Like the secret of Polichinelle, or like so many state secrets, His Majesty had no sooner given the command than it was known apparently to everyone in the house. During the *entr'acte* people told it to each other excitedly as they promenaded in the foyer or visited in the *loges*. Even Mr. Potts, Mr. Judd and Mr. Tuttle heard of it, and came running to us with the information and, although it had already reached us, they must tell it over again, enjoying the sensation of those who bring startling news. Nothing else was talked of—that and the sudden fame of Eleanor.

There was more gazing than ever at the royal box when people were once again in their places waiting for Nijinski and Karsavina to dance through that dream of rhythmic motion, "*Le Spectre de la Rose*." Weber's haunting waltz had just begun when Eleanor entered the presence of the King with Signor Tonnelli standing just behind her. Nijinski alone, that marvelous creature who upon the scene seems like a pagan god, a bounding faun, Nijinski alone could have held the attention of that audience so that only a few saw the King and the President rise and salute in turn the one who so lately had been Juliette and who still seemed to be the heroine she had so well portrayed.

"*Mademoiselle,*" said the King, as he stood before her with inclined head, "for a singer the only reward is the applause of those she delights. Anything else placed beside the public acclamation you have just received must appear almost meaningless, and yet I hope that I may be allowed to testify to the great joy you have given." He turned to his aide-de-camp and unpinned from that officer's breast a glittering, jeweled decoration. His Majesty spoke again with an added solemnity. "A great artist is an honor to all mankind. In the name of my people I create you an officer of the order of the Blessed Sainte Cécile of holy memory."

No greater honor comes to a musician than to wear the cross of Sainte Cécile, and Eleanor knelt gracefully as the

King bent over and fastened the insignia on her dress. With a gentle hand he pinned the jeweled cross just over her heart, and then, bending still lower, the Sovereign gravely, reverently bestowed the accolade.

When Eleanor rose her blue eyes were glistening and her heart too crowded with emotion to speak, but the wise King, looking upon her, knew what was in her thought. Silence is often the highest expression of appreciation.

Nor was Signor Tonnelli forgotten by His Majesty. The King congratulated him on the success of the evening, and said that his fame, which was already great, would henceforth be tenfold greater than it had ever been.

"Your Majesty's gracious compliment adds to my happiness," answered the impresario, "and I was already verra happy over Mademoiselle Eleonor's exquisite performance."

Eleanor and Signor Tonnelli, elated with what had passed, were on their way from the royal box to join our party, when suddenly Bruce Converse stood before them. Had he sprung from beneath the marble floor he could hardly have surprised them more, for the corridor had apparently been deserted. His eyes were wild, his face ashy white, and he seemed laboring under the stress of some great emotion that he was struggling to subdue.

"Eleonor!" He held out his hands toward her.

"You!" was all she could say, so startled had she been by his unexpected appearance.

"Have you no other greeting for me?" he asked bitterly.

She endeavored to calm herself. Her heart was wildly beating. "You frightened me," she said.

"I tried to see you before. I went to the stage entrance, but they would not let me pass. I should have forced my way past them, but they told me you had gone to the *loge* of the King. I was on my way there."

Eleanor was endeavoring desperately to be commonplace, but her lips trembled as she spoke. "I expected

to see you with our friends. Signor Tonnelli and I were just going to their *loge*. Shall we not join them?"

"No," he cried, "we must not go there. I hate them. I have learned to hate them while I heard you singing. It has been torment to me."

"That is hardly complimentary." She tried to smile.

It needs but a spark to cause the great explosion. Bruce Converse's control over himself was gone. His face was distorted as one in agony. "Eleonor, for God's sake do not laugh at me!" he said hoarsely. "Tonight when I saw you it brought back the old days. You cannot have forgotten them. I saw how these people who pretended to be our friends had acted to keep us apart. It came to me clearly. My God, how blind I had been before! Oh, I was blind, blind, blind! I loved you then as I love you now, but I let these false friends feed my selfish ambition. I hate them! I shall never see them again!"

There is a gentle dignity, a true valuation of becoming pride, that women possess in much finer degree than men. Converse had been selfish; he had been the egoist, and his neglect had left a wound a few impassioned words could not heal. Eleanor bore herself bravely, concealing her emotion, but the blood had left her face.

"You are wrong in speaking as you do," she answered.

"No, I am not wrong. Tonight when I saw you there, when I heard those people applauding you and calling your name, it seemed to me that you belonged to them, that you could never belong to me, that the happiness I used to know with you near was gone forever."

"Bruce," Eleanor began, and her voice had in it that impersonal quality that showed better than words how distant she had grown from him, "you are not yourself tonight, and I am very tired. We should not talk of these things now, but it is well that we understood each other. Whatever might have been once—"

He interrupted her with a cry.

THE MEDDLERS

49

"My God, Eleanor, don't speak of it as if it were forever past!"

"It is past, Bruce," she answered calmly. "I have had a long time to think of it, a long time when you were thinking of other things. These friends of ours, of yours more than of mine, who have talked to us, imparting their wisdom, have acted as they thought best for us. And they have been right."

"No, no," he protested.

"Yes, they have been right. We might as well regard the matter frankly. Their experience has been wider than ours. They have seen other careers, many of them. They have seen men and women able, eager to work for art, to help the world, just as you are helping it—men and women of genius brought down, made commonplace, useless, because they clung to each other's necks, bound each other's arms, fettered each other with their love. Sooner or later, sooner or later but surely, one wanted to be free, to work in the old way, and was held down by the other; and so their love burned out, their ambitions were unfulfilled, their souls became as dead as ashes."

Many philosophers hold that great love is akin to great hatred, the *odi et amo* of Catullus. The wise La Rochefoucauld has said: "Judging love by its effects, it resembles hate more often than love." Hatred, anger and wounded pride flamed in menacing, baneful light from Bruce Converse's eyes as he confronted Eleanor.

"It is not true! It is false!" he cried. "You do not yourself believe it. You are speaking this cant just to make it appear that you are not heartless. It is because you prefer the applause of those fools in there." He waved his hand contemptuously toward the auditorium of the theater. Through the closed doors the strains of Weber's waltz came to them distant as an echo. "No, it's because your ambition is set on a career and you would sacrifice anything for it. You want the cheap fame it will bring, the notoriety. You want people to come and flatter you and see you dressed up in absurd costumes on the

stage. It is that. You want to hear the world talk about you. God knows," he cried with bitter scorn, "it may be that you covet the money such things will bring to you."

Eleanor winced under the insult. Signor Tonnelli had been standing a little apart, holding himself admirably with eyes averted, appearing to hear nothing that was being said, but he had lost no word. Instantly now he intervened.

"Monsieur, you may not say such thing to this young lady. They are not true."

His words converted Bruce Converse into a madman. With one arm this giant swept the little impresario aside, and stood towering over him as if about to strike with terrible strength.

"You!" he cried. "You dare to interfere now! It is you who have taken this girl away; and for what? To make money out of her. That is all you care about. You think of nothing else. You would wreck her soul and mind and body, yes and gladly, just to put a few thousand francs into your pocket. Art!" He threw up his hands in a gesture of supreme contempt. "What do you know of art? What do you care for it? Money is your god; it is the god of all your tribe. You are after money, money, money—nothing else!"

Signor Tonnelli was a very brave little man. He was not frightened, but had a dagger been put in his hand I think he would have killed Converse then. He tried to speak calmly, but he made a sorry effort with his English.

"That is not true; he is a big lie. I would give a great voice to the world so everrbody could hear it and it would make him better. I would do that; but you, what would you do if you could, eh? You would take that so beautiful voice and put it in a little cage just for yourself. You are an artist, eh? You would do that. Yes, that is what you would do if you could. Bah!"

There came from the theater the applause that told the end of the ballet. Now I had observed the King and the President a few minutes before resume

their places. The royal party had now left the *loge*, and I wondered why Eleanor and Signor Tonnelli had not joined us. I went out into the corridor to look for them, and Eleanor, catching sight of me, ran forward and seized me by the arm.

"Prince Florimond," she cried, "please take me away at once. Take me to my hotel."

Her white face and frightened appeal caused me to realize that some untoward happening had shocked her. This was not the time or place to ask what it might be. I looked up and saw Converse and Tonnelli facing each other. Converse turned suddenly and walked away, leaving Tonnelli gazing after him defiantly. Intuitively came to me an intimation of what had happened.

People were streaming from the *loges*, hurrying on their way out of the opera house. Several had recognized Eleanor, and at once there was a crowd about her speaking her name and overwhelming her with congratulations.

"Please take me away quickly," she begged.

I caught sight of Madame Pointer standing at the door of her *loge*, and in dumb show, across the heads of the intervening people, I conveyed to her that Eleanor wished to go directly home. She understood. God's blessing on those women who always understand without explanations!

We made our way with difficulty, but when we came to the top of the great stairs the people formed a pathway for us, lining the wide stairway and leaning over the marble balustrades, cheering and applauding and calling Eleanor by name. Flowers were thrown that fell on her or at her feet. Bravely Eleanor bowed and smiled, but never did anyone in the hour of triumph wear so sad a countenance.

XV

OUR automobile had not quitted the brilliant Place de l'Opéra before Eleanor gave way to the tears that I was sure would come. We can often feel a woman's tears long before we see them.

"Oh-h-h!" she sobbed, quivering with pain and hiding her eyes with her hands as if she wished to shut out the vision of some tragic spectacle. "Oh-h-h! It was terrible, terrible! He hates me! He said that I—that I—" But her sobs choked further utterance.

I sat by her in silent sympathy, knowing that when a woman weeps it is not well to ask questions. In good time I was sure she would tell me all that she wished me to know, and I desired to hear only so much as would relieve her burdened spirit to tell or indicate to me how I might serve her. Long heartbreaking sobs continued to convulse her, but at last in unconnected words she had told me enough to make me aware of the dreadful scene she had been through.

"And I had been so happy the moment before," she cried bitterly. "I had persuaded myself that I was happy. Now it is ended. I shall hate the stage forever. I shall never sing in public again."

Vainly I tried to console her. "Never, never! It is finished," she answered.

It was not so much this determination—for when we are young "never" and "forever" are words that fall lightly from our lips—that caused me uneasiness as the suddenly revealed knowledge that she had loved so deeply Bruce Converse, loved him still, so that no other happiness was to be measured with that love. I covered myself with reproaches that I had helped to thwart this girl whom I held so dear, and who so implicitly trusted in me, from achieving her desire, beside which all else was as naught. I, a philosopher, had opposed one of nature's great laws, that of selection, and now I was seeing the consequences. Too late I was repenting of my folly.

With as much gentleness as I could, and an inward trembling, for my soul was afraid, I confessed to Eleanor that which had been done. I spared not myself, for I knew that I might not escape the responsibility, but I tried to make plain to her that what we had

done had been inspired by an ill guided desire to help him and her. She heard me silently. As we drove up to the wide, deserted doorway of her hotel she placed her hand on mine.

"I have known it all along," she said quietly. "I could see what was being done. There is no use to talk about it now. It is too late. You must not blame yourself too much; you are my good friend. I know that all of you acted as you thought best." Wounded as she was, her gentleness, her sweetness did not desert her.

The automobile had stopped and the man was waiting at the door, but I detained her. "You will let me come to see you tomorrow?" I asked. "And promise me that you will not take this too much to heart tonight. You will go to your aunt? She is waiting for you?"

She nodded her head. "Poor Aunt Ella! She left the theater to come here to have a good cry, as she said. She was so happy."

Eleanor tried to smile, but I could see that a fresh torrent of tears lay under the eyes that met mine. Before that torrent could be released she had hastily said "Good-bye" and vanished into the hotel.

That night I could not sleep. My mind was troubled about Eleanor, and I pictured her as robbed also of sleep not only for this night but probably for many nights to come, by a regret that it had been my misfortune in part to cause her. Every effort, I determined, should be made to undo what had been done. My brain worked busily with schemes to achieve this end, and I waited impatiently for the morning to come. Life is never so attractive to us as when it offers the opportunity to repair the mistakes of the past. Eagerly I wished to set about my task. As soon as the servants were about I rang for my breakfast. I was having my coffee when Gaspard came with a letter.

"What, the *courrier* already!" I exclaimed.

Gaspard gazed at me with melancholy misgiving. "No, my master, it

is but seven o'clock. This was brought but this instant by a man servant in great haste, who said it was of the utmost importance."

The letter was from Madame Pointer. I guessed at something of its import as I tore open the envelope. The first words were a cry of alarm. Converse had written her a dark, frightening letter, which he had left in person with her *concierge* at sunrise. He was fleeing from France, from those whom he now implicated in the wreck of his life.

"I am nearly crazed with remorse and apprehension," Madame Pointer wrote. "Help us, my true, good friend, to undo the wrong we have done. His letter makes me fear that in his present state of mind he may do something desperate."

Immediately I left my breakfast table, anxious to find Bruce Converse without a moment's delay.

"My master has not finished his coffee," Gaspard urged.

"It will wait until I return," I answered, as I went out of the house and into the street.

The first cab that I saw I hailed. During the long night of pondering my imagination had seen the situation from every aspect, even this one of threatened tragedy, and I felt that I knew now where I might find Bruce Converse. I went, not to that new studio in the Parc Monceau quarter, with its luxurious appointments, but to the old studio in the Rue d'Assas, and there, even as I had imagined, I found him. He was endeavoring to persuade good Madame Guillou to let him see the old room for a last time, and she, who held the keys of the new tenant who had gone away for the summer, wavered between her duty as *concierge* and her wish to please one who had once been her favorite *locataire*. I think she suspected something of the reason for his request.

If ever a man stood in need of a friend it was Bruce Converse then. His condition I can describe only by a popular idiom—he was all gone to pieces. His bloodless face, his reddened eyelids, the unbrushed hair, his clothes, all showed

plainly that he had gone through what we call a white night. Undoubtedly he had not slept; it is probable he had been on his feet all the time, walking the streets aimlessly, propelled by that throbbing engine in his brain that would not cease.

I laid a hand gently on his arm. He seemed to take my presence for granted, for he only looked at me as one who is at the end of his strength, who can resist no more, like delirious fever patients who, after paroxysms in which their force seems inexhaustible, lie calmly back, unequal to the slightest further exertion, with the returned light of reason shining dimly in their eyes.

"I want you to come with me, my friend," I said to him, and, unresisting, he allowed me to conduct him to the cab. Wearily he sank upon the seat. I told the driver where to go, and scarcely a word was spoken as we rode across the city to Eleanor's hotel. It may have been that to Bruce Converse that drive was only a part of the wild dream from which he felt he must some time awake.

I was familiar with the suite of rooms that had been set apart for Eleanor and Mrs. Crackenby, and we went at once to them. My knock at the door was answered by Fiorella, who had once been a model, and had been taken by Eleanor into service as a maid. Astonishment and relief were so eloquent upon her features that I knew her emotions must try to find expression in words, so with a finger on my lip I cautioned her to silence.

"Tell your mistress that I am here and must see her at once alone. Do not say that anyone else is with me."

"Oh, Monsieur le Prince, she has not slept. She has done nothing but weep. What has happened?"

"S-sh! Ask no questions, but go and do as you are bid."

She disappeared and almost at once the door reopened and Eleanor entered. Poor Eleanor, how my heart pitied her! Her face showed the suffering she had undergone. She had not changed her dress. Her dark, waving hair was down about her shoulders. Under her

eyes were blue shadows. She met my gaze with a look of hopeless inquiry. Misery had walked with her that night to the world's end. Then as her look traveled beyond me and she became slowly aware of the presence of Converse, a clear light came into her tear-washed eyes.

"Bruce!" she cried, holding out her arms to him. "Bruce! Oh, I am so glad!"

And Bruce Converse, as though the hideous specters of his dream had at last been chased away, repeated words that had been upon his lips ever since that horrid nightmare had begun: "Eleanor, forgive me!"

As his arms folded about her and he held her as if he intended never to release her again in this world, he kept repeating: "I am so sorry, so sorry, so sorry;" and she murmured all the while: "Oh, I am so glad, so glad, so glad!" It is the strange language of love. One was weeping and making a confession of joy, while upon the lips of the other was a confession of sorrow, yet their meaningless words meant all and everything to themselves, and each one understood. Sorrow and joy—they were the same to those two. Henceforth there could be no sorrow and no joy for one without the other. They were one; the mind of one was the mind of the other. Words were of no avail, they counted for naught; love gave expression to the thought that was in their heart. Love was all in all; no consideration of glory sullied its pure beauty; no idea of separation, now or after, clouded its radiance. They were standing upon the heights where it is always sunshine.

Quietly I slipped out of the door. Truly I had beheld more than it was my privilege or my intention to behold, but now the precious *souvenir* was mine: as long as life should last I should see them as I saw them then. Exalted I rode away, with a song on my lips.

The world was topsy-turvy that morning, and I was not the least topsy-turvy of the lot. I drove directly to the home of Madame Pointer to acquaint her with the news that would

turn her dismay to delight. Early as it was, she was out. My mind conceived what mission it was that occupied her. Awkwardly and with pain I wrote with my left hand a few words that should console her. Thence I went to the Vicomte de Volney's. He, too, was away from home.

Only when I reached my door was I conscious of a great fatigue. The sleepless nights had told on me. There was fever in my wounded arm, and I was glad to lie down to rest. But sleep does not come when the brain is busy weaving intricate patterns in the fabric of life. I tried to force myself into a state of repose, but the shuttle of my thoughts flew too swiftly. The fatigue of the body could not conquer the activity of the brain. It seemed to me that I had been fighting this battle with my rebellious faculties for many hours and was on the point of obtaining a victory, when Gaspard tiptoed into the room.

"Is it not enough," I said to him crossly, "that you watch constantly over my waking moments? Must you come creeping into my bedchamber to observe how I sleep?"

He bowed his head before the rebuke. "*Pardon.* It is the American gentleman, who says he will see my master at once, and will not accept of my excuses."

To Gaspard Mr. Spaulding Knapp was always "the American gentleman." Some important mission, some new development in the recent exciting events, I argued, must be the cause of his urgent demand. I rose.

"Tell the gentleman I descend immediately. I shall not keep him waiting."

It was a different Mr. Knapp that I met in my *salon*. His aggressiveness was gone. Hesitatingly he apologized for disturbing me, and seemed unable to tell me directly the object of his visit.

"I should not have insisted upon seeing you were it not for the fact that I am leaving at once for Cherbourg, there to take the steamer for America. My automobile is at the door. It is

unlikely that I shall return to France, and I have come to say good-bye."

"Oh, surely you will return," I made haste to say. "I did not know you were going so soon, but do not pretend that the parting is to be for so long. I should greatly regret it. Ah, no, you are one of those Americans who look upon crossing the ocean as we Frenchmen look upon crossing the Seine. You will soon return."

He shook his head. "It is unlikely." Then his clear gray eyes looked unflinchingly into mine. "Prince, the object of my visit was not alone to say good-bye." He paused and then went on more rapidly. "When I came to Paris this time, it was, as you probably know, in response to an urgent cable message from Leslie Pointer." Again he paused, as if what he wished to say were difficult.

"Yes, I know," I said.

"I have known her nearly all her life," Mr. Knapp continued. "From the time she was a little girl I have been in love with her. If I have accomplished anything worth while in my life, I ascribe it to my desire to be worthy of her love—to have something I could offer her and not be ashamed. I saw her marry my closest friend, Pointer, and she was not very happy. When he died my life was again devoted to the thought of some day persuading her to be my wife. It was not to be. Long ago she made me understand that I could never be anything to her but the good friend I had always tried to be."

Strong man as he was, it was not easy for Spaulding Knapp to continue, but he seemed to take a firmer hold of himself to force his confession to the end. "Today I have learned that my hope, which had been reborn because of her message to me, was false. The error was my own, entirely my own. The significance I gave to her urgent demand that I should come here sprang from my own desire. She wished my presence in Paris solely that I might witness Miss Moore's triumph. It is one of the noble traits of her character—interest in others. She has aided

many." He was silent for a moment. "My mistake," he went on, "forced from her an admission, Prince, of her love for you. I perhaps have no right to speak of it, for I think she would not now have told me of it had she not wished to convince me of the hopelessness of my love for her, but I may not have the opportunity to talk to you again."

My brain was reeling. The blood pounded at my temples so that I was hardly sure I heard his words aright. "I have come to congratulate you, but not for that alone," he continued. "I wished you to know of my love for her and how long it has endured. It is unnecessary to say to you what I am about to say, but so many American women have coveted titles that I came here intending to say it, and you will understand. Although your title is so high and your name so honored, it is not that which has influenced her choice. Her love for you would have been the same had you possessed neither title nor fortune. It is that which I wish you always to remember. Be kind to her—but you are always kind. She herself has said so more than once since I have known you. I shall always be your friend—your friend and hers. Good-bye."

I could not speak. All my senses were marshaled in an effort to keep myself from falling, for I was dizzy with the emotion of exquisite joy his words had caused. Never had I dared before to hope; never had I dared to acknowledge even to myself this love that had lain so long in my heart. What I had imagined was a secret fastened within my own soul was now proclaimed by another's lips. And she, the object of my silent adoration, had seen! And the love I bore her was mysteriously returned!

I stood there alone in my own house and trembled for my reason. My troubled gaze sought familiar objects about the room, fastening upon them as an anchor to steady my whirling senses, endeavoring by my remembrance of these familiar things to convince myself that what I had heard was real.

XVI

It is true, perhaps, that I am old-fashioned in this modern France of the free thinkers, but never have I failed to find consolation and help in the ancient faith of my fathers. The experience of a life already growing long has taught me that, instinctively in the great crises of existence, when depressed by supreme sorrow or exalted by exquisite joy, we seek a Power beyond our own to bear with us the burden of our grief or hear our confession of gratitude for our supernal happiness. After all, have not the great philosophers, though they would confuse it by many names, reached the same conclusion?

When that surprising Mr. Spaulding Knapp had left me, and I was again master of myself, I went to the little chapel in my home, and, kneeling there before the altar, I gave thanks to my Maker. Then, almost as a compelling rite of sentiment, I went to my room and placed fresh red roses in that vase of Lancaster that had been a prince's gift to my mother so many years before.

When I departed from my house it was glorious summer, a day full of sunshine. *Oh, le beau soleil!* I could have run to the presence of her whom I sought. With pain I prevented myself from leaping into an automobile and quickly going whither I was bound, but a something stronger almost than life itself stayed me, a something of old tradition.

"Calm thyself," I counseled my beating heart. "Thou must go about this matter with becoming dignity. Give time to thyself for reflection, that at last thou mayst be master of thy emotions and show thyself worthy of thy blood."

I walked by the Seine, whose waters were dancing with joy, reflecting the gay color of trees and passing boats. I crossed the Pont de l'Alma with its soldiers of stone, and so up the broad avenue to the Etoile. And then I was in her home, in the room that spoke so of her, waiting and endeavoring to be calm as the slow moments passed. I heard the rustling of her dress in the

antechamber and she stood at the door, smiling, both hands outstretched.

"Oh, Prince Florimond, how can I ever thank you?"

Love that is love makes sacred the object of its worship. Yesterday I could have taken her hands into my own; now it was that for the moment I could not bear that mine should touch her. I spoke to her the words that I had framed during my walk.

"Madame, I received today a visit from Monsieur Spaulding Knapp, to whom I shall be henceforth forever grateful. It is he who, in his great friendship, has given me the courage to speak. I should never have possessed the audacity to confess to you what has so long been the cherished secret of my heart. I had not dared to—"

Of what use are the resolves of calmness? Philosophy and philosophers are powerless against the primal human emotions. All that I had schooled myself to say was gone in a moment, and I was kneeling before my saint, pouring forth my prayer in a cascade of words that had in them neither philosophy nor logic nor much of thought, but, springing in flood from an overflowing heart, they bore on like the harmony of falling waters the wild music of my love. God knows, I knelt there so close to my beloved in all humility. Who was I that I should so aspire? What could I offer for a treasure beyond all worldly price? An honored name? Fortune? What are they in comparison to youth? And that, alas, I could no longer give as one counts the relentless years.

"Leslie, God has been good to me. Never before today have I allowed myself to contemplate the life that I have lived as lonely and barren. I have striven as best I might with the cold philosophies of ancients and moderns to sustain me, but always, in my secret heart, I have waited for this day. Now I realize how blank and bleak has been my existence. Now I know that without you I could not long have lived. I must have died as plants die, withered and dried and blown away by the winds, but now, oh, my princess, you have come like sunshine to bring back freshness

and strength and life, and for you I shall be always young. My name shall not now die with me, and you will make that name even more honored than it has been before. Today before I came to you I prayed to the good God to make me worthy of you, and I placed roses to the memory of my mother, telling her that you were as she had been, and in my heart was a heavenly peace, for I knew that she was happy in the great happiness of her son. It was as if we were closer than we had been since she died, when I was a little child."

But Madame Pointer took quickly one step back from me. "No! No! No!" she cried. "No! I cannot listen! Don't!"

As I tried to speak she put one hand upon my forehead, as if to prevent me from continuing. So strong had been the torrent of my words she could not until then have spoken.

"Spaulding Knapp!" she exclaimed. "What has he said to you?" Her words came mechanically, as one who while speaking bends the mind to recall other words.

"It was he, who loves you almost as I do, who came to me and gave me the courage to hope."

"But, tell me—say it to me just as he said it to you—repeat his words—what did he say? What—*could* he have said?" Her voice was a monotone, and she seemed to be struggling to speak audibly.

As best I could I told her of the visit I had received that afternoon. When I had finished a sob convulsed her, causing her whole body to tremble, and she hid her face in her hands. Gently I tried to remove them. They were as ice.

"It was my mistake," she sobbed. "How can you ever forgive me? I never dreamed that he could misunderstand. I told him I was to be married. I had not meant to tell anyone just now, but he has"—a last sob interrupted her—"he has known me ever since I was a child. He has been always the best of friends and my adviser, and I feared—it was foolish of me, but he is intensely proud of America—I feared

he might think I had been blinded by a title. I mentioned no name. Oh, what a foolish coward I was, but it was all so new to me I could not bring myself to speak the name I am to bear. I see now what he thought, for we had been talking so much of you and of your great kindness. I am to marry the Vicomte de Volney. As soon as Spaulding Knapp left me I wrote to you. I thought you had received the letter. I thought when I saw you—I thought you had come to congratulate me."

De Volney! De Volney! The name went crashing through my brain like a shot that ends life. Why had I not seen? How foolish, how blind I had been! It was plain enough now, but—Bertrand de Volney! I had thought he was one who had steeled himself against love.

I made an effort to speak. "I do congratulate you. He is worthier than I. May you both be forever happy."

She came to where I stood, and her hand rested tenderly upon mine. "Prince Florimond, I am so very sorry." Tears were in her eyes. God bless her.

How I got myself out of the house I do not know. I hope I made not a too bad show of it. Yes, I should desire to think that I acquitted myself well. It is the crises of life that determine whether a man, whatever he may be born, be really a peasant or a prince.

I must have wandered about for several hours, but of it I recall nothing. Then I became conscious that I was standing on the Quai des Grands Augustins, talking to an ancient *bouquiniste* who had sold books to my father, and who still spoke of me as "the young Prince." It was dark and a soft rain was falling. I was burning up with fever. The wound in my arm was like fire, and my body seemed numb with pain. Gratefully I felt the cooling raindrops beat upon my face and hands.

"The young Prince is not well," the old man was saying. "Monsieur should not be out in this dog's weather without the protection of an umbrella."

I looked into the ambushed eyes of

the sturdy old graybeard muffled in his cape.

"And is it thou, Père Cormon, standing in the rain at thy age, who shouldst warn me to cover myself like a woman?" I replied to him in raillery.

"It is well for us who are used to it to take the weather as it comes," was his kindly answer, "but the young Prince should seek his home."

"Thou art right, my old friend, and grateful am I that I have a home to go to, for, in truth, I am tired. The 'young Prince' is no longer young." I gave the brave man a gold piece against the morrow's purchase and took my way homeward.

Never have the steps of my father's house seemed so lonely. The thought struck me like a knife that I must go up and down them forever alone and there would never be another Prince de Saint-Sauveur whose feet would press them.

Gaspard was at the door, anxious as he was always, but now I felt no resentment because of his solicitude. He is a good and faithful friend, old Gaspard, and I have not been always as gentle with him as he deserves.

"My master is ill!" he cried when he saw me.

"Nonsense. It is nothing. Is the dinner ready?"

"Ready this long time, my master."

In my room I found her letter. Something said to me it might be the last I should ever receive from her, and as I slowly read it I raised to my lips the page her hand had touched.

With difficulty I dressed. That trifling wound was giving me no end of bother. When I came down to the table Gaspard was standing by my chair, the look of anxiety still in his eyes. I thought of the old servant, who had drunk with my father to the health of my sainted mother, and I thought, too, of how he had raised his glass with my father when I was born.

"Gaspard," I commanded, "I wish you to fill two glasses."

He asked no questions but his hand trembled. Standing, I took one of the glasses he had filled.

"Raise your glass, Gaspard," I said

to him. "I wish you to join me in drinking to the health and happiness of a noble and beautiful lady, Madame Leslie Pointer."

The old man's face went suddenly whiter than I had ever seen it, and he almost spilled the wine on the tablecloth, something he had never done in his life.

When we had drunk the toast I said to him:

"She is soon to be married to one of the best of men, my good friend and yours, the Vicomte Bertrand de

Volney, whose health I now propose."

"God be thanked!" he gasped fervently, and this time the glass shot to his lips.

I looked at him sharply when the unexpected exclamation escaped him.

"Gaspard, you are an old fool," I said to him sternly.

Then, as he turned away from me to hide the tears that were streaming down his white cheeks, I added more gently:

"We are two old fools, Gaspard. You may serve the dinner."



TO MY VALENTINE

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

THE wind elves dance on the barren boughs
 And pipe a glad refrain,
 And the sunbeams spin their floss of gold
 To cover hill and plain.
 And the warm blood throbs in the heart of the Year,
 For Spring is coming and skies are clear;
 And I send to you, O my Valentine,
 This glad, sad, longing love of mine,
 This old true love, my dear.

I do not mourn that I cannot send
 Rich jewels of the mart—
 I give to you with all my dreams
 The treasure from my heart.
 And I laugh with the wind elves at my fear,
 Yet my heart beats fast, O my dear, my dear;
 And the pipes of Pan, where the gay sun gleams,
 Warm the world like the wine of dreams,
 And I know that you will hear!



BRIDGES—What's your cure for a cold?
 RIVERS—Never had one.
 "What—never had a cold? Remarkable!"
 "Never had a cure for one."
 "Oh! Still more remarkable!"

THE ADVENTURER

By Gordon Johnstone

THERE'S ne'er a land that's worth the glance that doesn't know me greeting,
The maids o' heathen devils kissed the paths me feet have trod;
And many were the wiles o' them that kept me stout heart beating,
And many were the eyes o' them that waited on me nod.
("For shame, lad!" cry the colleens,
The pretty blushing colleens
O' the ould, ould sod.)

I've followed ways both wild and strange on earth and pirate coaster,
I've roamed in torrid jungles when the night dark hid our work;
I've carried guns across the line to many an exiled boaster,
And hobnobbed with a Sultan as a black-skinned turbaned Turk.
("Give o'er lad," sighs me mother,
Me wistful dreaming mother,
Where the shadows lurk.)

A rover's heart is like the wind that brooks no bit or tether,
But throw the highways open and his feet must dance along;
He'll find the worst path heaven with a comrade bird together
To share the cup o' wayside tears and break the bread o' song.
("Come back, lad," call the mountains,
The rolling soaring mountains,
And their lilting throng.)

'Tis now I'm drifting homeward through the years that bend me shoulders,
'Tis now the blood that once leaped hot and rash as fiery wine
Creeps slow as slimy water o'er the mossy dripping bowlders
And casts me up on her dim shores as driftwood o' the brine,
("Me own lad!" cries ould Erin,
Ould sweet, forgiving Erin,
With her lips to mine!)



SHE—Why is it you have never proposed to any girl?
CHAPPIE—I'm wedded to myself.
"Then why don't you get a divorce and resume your maiden name?"

THE JOURNEY'S END

By Laurence North

WHEN a man falls out of the running, two years can make terrible havoc of him.

It was just two years and a half since Oliver Flaunden had dropped behind in the race. He fell out gaily enough, believing that he could not remain long among the unemployed. He had been a useful man at his post—something in insurance—and he imagined, with some justice, that his employers valued him. But he forgot that no man is indispensable in this world. Consequently, when he resigned on being refused a raise in salary, the house quietly let him go. If he had seen how the board meeting grinned, he would have been chastened. "Fool!" said the chairman. He amplified the "fool." "However, no matter; young Philpots will do the work as well for half the money. If beggars will be choosers, it's not for us, gentlemen, to gainsay their choice." The board grinned responsive to its chairman and appointed young Philpots—at half the money.

And thus Flaunden passed out into the street, where for many days he wandered up and down, with a good character, excellent abilities and his thirty-nine years to offer to any employer who might have need of such. Many wanted the good character and the abilities; but the thirty-nine years, so soon to be forty—oh, no. "Rather old. Thank you; good day."

Fortunately, the chairman had not been quite accurate. Flaunden was not altogether a beggar. He had a little, not much, to fall back upon. For the first six months, therefore, he went on his quest hopefully enough.

He simply couldn't miss finding a berth. The idea was ridiculous! So he knocked diligently at door after door, refusing to be discouraged. But no man encouraged Oliver Flaunden to persevere in that comfortable assurance.

Even the failure of the concern in which his little patrimony was invested did not daunt him. It was annoying certainly, but he had still the modest savings of many years of toil. That would keep him going until he found something to do. It could not be long now. He regretted having to leave the pleasant rooms he had occupied so long as a happy and rather Bohemian bachelor. Still, it was a necessary economy; and with luck he might return to them soon. His landlady shed tears and promised that the rooms would always be "wanted by a party" and that any other "party" who might take them in the meantime would be given to understand that he had no continuing city. He would be strictly on sufferance. Oliver thanked the good woman and went his way.

Then began the tale of mean streets; of meaner and meaner streets as the days went on. The savings, which had looked so comforting in the time when there was not only a salary but the small income Flaunden had inherited from his mother, now seemed to shrink to insignificance. And the shrinkage was but only apparent. Visits to the tailor, the hatter, the bootmaker and the hosier, so necessary if probable employers were to be interviewed, made sad havoc of his capital. Well, the stomach must be denied. Better a hungry stomach than frayed cuffs and

baggy trousers. The probable employer would not notice the one (for the present at least), but the other—that was visible to the naked eye and meant incivility from underlings and a short shrift when the master's secretary was reached, if he were reached. Oliver went warily, however, avoiding tea shops as much as possible. One good meal at a good place was really cheaper and better than desultory snacks.

He watched his appearance carefully every morning as he shaved. No; as yet privation told no tale. Sooner or later, he knew, it must; but before then he would be in clover again and this would be merely a sporting adventure, to be laughed over. So he paid his futile calls and answered innumerable advertisements equally futile. He would not be beaten.

What a fortunate thing that he was unmarried! If—well, that was all past and done with. Lucky for her and for him that madness passed. Where, he wondered, was Lucy now? In this wilderness of a London they would very likely live out their separate lives without meeting again. And yet to think that they had once seen each other nearly every day! Oh, those snatched moments in the city at lunch time; those long happy summer evenings in the Park when the band played and the twilight fell softly; those nights in the upper circle, sometimes even in the dress circle—Bah! He was growing sentimental. Lucy would have got some other young man by this time. It had been quite wise to be so practical. They had figured it all out together: comparative comfort for themselves, but had seen no prospect of meeting increased responsibilities. It was good-bye, therefore, for Lucy must not lose her chances. She would have many. He had fancied she wanted to ask him a question, but she checked the words on her lips. "Very well," she murmured with a serious look in her eyes, "I suppose it is for the best. Poverty's a dismal thing. Good-bye."

They parted at a tube station. He bought her ticket and watched the lift

swallow her up. It was a twopenny ending to it all.

Tonight he could not get rid of those memories. He had a sort of uncanny sense that Lucy could not be very far away. But he hoped they would not meet. The two years of inaction, hope deferred and steadily dwindling pence had begun to tell. Oliver was no longer the trim clerk he had been when he served in the Saturn Life Office. Not yet out at elbows or quite down at heel, he had, nevertheless, that look of incipient decay which is perhaps more damning than looped and windowed raggedness.

"My dear young friend," said Disraeli, "never be shabby-genteel. You simply cannot afford it."

Flaunden had struggled against the mint marks of poverty, but poverty had been too much for him. It always is. Conscious of his worn coat and frayed linen, he no longer bore himself confidently when he made application. He was still "applying," but every venture was now a forlorn hope. He had passed his fortieth birthday, and his forty-first, and but for one or two brief spells of employment as supernumerary, he had earned nothing since he left the Saturn Life.

Had he been of a different type he would have laughed ironically at the "Saturn." But that sort of allusion was above Oliver Flaunden. He was not by any means illiterate; in fact, among the young men at the office he had passed for a "jolly well-read chap." He had his world of the imagination, such as it was; he devoured a certain kind of fiction, he was devoted to the play. He and Lucy used to discuss everything and they imagined themselves quite "literary."

Lucy herself was also by way of being "artistic." She worked in a designer's office and could dress suits creditably within limits. When she and Oliver paid their yearly visit to the Academy, she corrected his taste with a very pretty professional zeal. But he could never quite make out why the muddled-up things should be the "real art" and the pictures that really looked like

things you saw were not art at all. But he did not mind; they had been so absurdly happy, until they had begun to want the cost.

The trouble with them had been that they were both by birth a little above the class into which circumstances had driven them. Oliver had been the son of a small landowner. He had been intended for the army, but his father's sudden death confused everything. A distant relative got him into the Saturn, where he rose gradually, until pride went before a fall. Lucy was the orphan daughter of a country vicar. Both had certain ideals of married life and of what a well ordered home should be. The finer instincts of their class could not face anything approaching squabs. They had enough intelligence to know that marriage on little, with no prospect of increased income, means squalor in the end. Well, as it was, Oliver had come near it, without marriage. But Lucy at least was safe. Perhaps she was well married by this time. With that for comfort, he applied again, and Forty-two slammed the door in his face.

It was getting dark; the streets were wet and cheerless, and Oliver noticed that his boots were not at all what winter boots should be. He did not care to go back to his miserable lodging. Why go back at all? He had paid up to today. The few things he had left were not worth fetching away. He himself was hardly worth fetching away.

He looked around him as he stood at Charing Cross. About him beat the ceaseless life of London. The tide of playgoers was setting eastward. The Play! How long it was since he had been in a theater. For more than a year he had rigidly denied himself any amusement that cost money. How forlorn he felt, how starved! Yes, starved, bodily and mentally. How pleasant it would be to know for even an hour a little of the life and color, such as it was, of the old days!

Sometimes he and Lucy used to dine at a place, quite a moderate place, where there was a band. The music

used to be quite intoxicating. He would like to hear it again just this once. Was there any use going on with the struggle? Seventeen and sixpence left. And that was the end—the end within a fortnight. Why eke it out? He was not so miserably clothed as to be denied entrance to places. Why not a good dinner with wine and music, a cheap seat in the theater, some supper perhaps, and then— He glanced down Northumberland Avenue toward the river, shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Time enough to think about that when the time came. Even then, better not think of it at all.

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

He had always been fond of his Shakespeare, which he knew pretty well. He tried to forget the lines. They were annoying. Well, a meal was a great summoner of resolution.

Ugh! How sharply the east wind bit as it swept along the Strand, tearing the newspaper bills from the railings near the Post Office, cutting through thin clothes, raising small storms in puddles from which the lamplight was reflected in big staggering lines. A wretched sight! But tonight Flaunden was to have done with wretchedness. What mattered the weather? He jingled his seventeen and sixpence in his pocket and made for a lighted doorway.

The warmth and the smell of good food that filled the long gallery almost stupefied Flaunden for a moment or two after he entered. Then he pulled himself together and made for a corner table at which he had often dined in the days of his prosperity. Nor had he dined alone there; that little nook held many memories. He and Lucy had liked to imagine themselves Bohemians. Once he had read a translation of Henri Murger; Lucy knew it in the original. That was the source of their amiable delusion. Poor dears! They did not dream how far removed they were from Rodolphe and Mimi, Marcel, Musotto and Schaunard. Not only the Straits of Dover but a whole Atlantic of

thought and feeling separated them. But, happily, Lucy and Oliver did not know that they were amiable shams.

As he sat down, Oliver was conscious once again of that strange impression of Lucy's presence. He looked around the room. No, she was not there. It was ridiculous to expect to see her. Did he expect to do so? Would he be pleased to meet her? This mood of introspection was new to him. He knew little about the temperament that questions itself. He had never been intellectual enough to be a self-tormentor. His feelings resolved themselves into a vague puzzle, and gradually, before the warmth of the place and the comfort of the meal he had ordered, he grew oddly cheerful. The past and the future ceased to worry him. Here again were good food, good wine and a pleasant sense of well-being. It was sufficient. His happiness was the greater that he did not definitely form these thoughts.

He had finished his soup and fish, when his dream came true. He looked and looked again. Yes, no—yes—there was no mistake!

Up the long room she came slowly, listlessly, glancing to the right and left, but still taking no vacant place. But for the air of weariness and touch of pallor she was the same. The slight figure, the wistful gray eyes, the delicate face, the petulant mouth, the strange air of refinement, even of art, in the clothes that obviously cost nothing, the rich masses of black hair caught low over the dainty ears—all were unchanged. And yet, and yet—there was a difference—somehow. A more acute thinker might have understood, but Oliver had little subtlety of insight. He was only conscious that his senses were all a-whirl.

Lucy came opposite to his place and raised her eyes. She did not start or flush. The beautiful lips scarcely trembled. She seemed rather like a traveler who had reached his journey's end and was glad.

Time and separation seemed of no account. The girl held out a slim hand and bade Oliver good morning as

easily and naturally as though it had been one of their meetings long ago. Surprise rather than any intelligent self-command taught him the right thing to do.

"Have you dined?" he asked.

"No," she replied. "I've only just come in."

"Are you meeting anyone?"

"Yes."

"How unlucky! I hoped you could dine with me. But won't you sit down here till your friends come?"

She looked at him keenly, questioningly. How nice of him to say friends, not friend. He shrank a little from her eyes. She would notice the difference in his looks, his clothes. Well, he must put up with that.

"They are late," she said, glancing at the clock and sitting down.

Selfishly Oliver said, "I hope they won't come."

A faint wave of color swept over Lucy's cheeks. "Oh, they're sure to come," she replied quickly. "Do go on with your dinner; it will get cold."

She began pulling off her worn gloves. The pretty fingers were thinner, but they were as carefully kept as ever. Lucy might have only a very moderate talent, but she had the artist's hand and was very proud of it.

"It is miserable outside tonight," she began, with a shiver.

Oliver poured out a glass of Burgundy. "Drink that," he said. "I hope you haven't caught cold."

"Thank you. No fear of cold. You know how strong I am." She curled one finger round the stem of the wine-glass and hesitated.

"Ought I?" she asked, looking at the wine. "Before dinner?"

"Doctor's orders," Oliver said firmly.

"I fear you're a sad quack," she laughed back. "Well, I do feel rather chilly and I think my feet are wet. But what about my head?"

"Good Burgundy is food," Oliver remarked. "It will do you no harm."

She sipped the wine. Now and then she looked round.

"Those people *are* late," she said. "Do go on with your meal. You're

only pretending. If you don't eat I'll go away and sit by myself."

"Look here," he said at last. "I don't believe those people are coming."

"You don't mean—" she began sharply.

"No, no. Of course I believe in their existence, but they don't deserve to be waited for. Do throw them over and dine with me. Then we'll go on to a theater afterward."

"I can easily wait," she said carelessly.

"Aren't you hungry?"

"A little. Nothing to speak of."

"You used to be ravenous before dinner."

It was the first hint either of them had given of former days.

"Girls are hungry creatures," Lucy parried, laughing; "the hungriest in creation, I think; but tonight, somehow, it's different."

"I hate to sit here stuffing, while you have nothing."

"I have my Burgundy, which is food."

"One can't dine on Burgundy. Come, be sensible. Your friends won't mind, if they do come."

"Give them five minutes more," Lucy said, "and I consent. They'll think me an awful greedy. They're sure to come."

She had taken only three sips of her wine. After that she left it untasted.

At the end of five minutes Oliver called the waiter and held out the long menu to Lucy. "Now," he said masterfully, "choose."

"I'll have just what you have," she said, waving the card aside. "Goodness, I *am* hungry, after all. No, please. I'll not go back to the beginning. I'll just go on with you."

But he was firm. "Give me my revenge," he said. "It's my turn to sit idle for a little."

"Then you can tell me all about yourself," she said, unfolding her napkin. "How's the world using you?"

"Kindly, kindly," he replied, thinking only of the present moment.

Lucy's face lighted up. "I'm so glad," she cried. "Do you know, Noll,

I fancied—forgive me, boy, but I fancied when I saw—when I saw that you hadn't—been to the tailor for a long time—that—oh, you know what I thought. I feared you'd grown careless since you hadn't—" She paused and blushed.

"Since I hadn't you to tell me when I was getting shabby."

She nodded demurely while a whimsical smile played about her lips. "The fish is delicious," she said. "They always did things nicely here, although it's not quite a first class place, I suppose. I wonder what can have kept the people? Never mind, I've quite given them up now."

"Are you glad they didn't come?"

"Would it be good for you to tell you? But you've told me nothing about yourself and what you've been doing. Are you still with the Saturn?"

"No; I left about two years ago."

"Good move?"

"In some ways, yes!"

"Noll, Noll, don't tell me you've grown miserly?" She touched his frayed cuff playfully, and gave him a bewitching little sidelong glance.

"If I have, it's been because there was no one to care how I looked."

"But your employers, what about them?"

"Oh, they're not particular."

"But you say it's a good office. Which one is it anyway?"

"The General Self-Help."

"Where is it?"

"Oh—Finsbury Pavement. Now, turn about's fair play. What about yourself? Still with Faucett's?"

"No; they had to reduce their staff six months ago and I had to go."

"My dear girl! But you easily found something else to do."

"Not so easily, but—"

"You found something?"

She gave a hurried little nod. Oliver asked no more questions. Perhaps it wasn't quite so "high-class" as Faucett's. He knew how sensitive she was about her work. She loved to be thought an artist.

"I'm so glad," he continued. "It's awful to be out of work."

"But I'd a few little savings," she said resolutely.

"Still, savings soon melt, when there's nothing coming in."

She raised her eyebrows. "They do," she agreed emphatically. "I hope you'll never know about that, Noll dear." She looked down and played with her fork. "Do you know, boy," she said at last, with a slight shame-faced blush, "I've often wondered whether we weren't two fools. We had such high and mighty notions about being gentlefolks and all that, and what was due to our class. We asked too much of life. Our class! Why that was past and done with. Why didn't we see that we were both plain working people and take the chance we had of happiness? We could have got along nicely, and now that you're better off—well—" She spread out her hands with a pretty despairing gesture. "But it's too late now. Why cry over spilt milk?" She gave a dry hard laugh.

Oliver controlled himself with an effort. A great stab struck his heart. Oh, God, to be able to tell her that it was not too late! He cursed the foolish pride that had driven him into the street. Lucy seemed to hang upon his next words. Well, he must put her off somehow, as kindly as he could. The brutal truth would be best in the end, but his courage failed him.

"Why too late?" he temporized.

She seemed to grow careless again.

"Oh, I don't know," she said lightly; "perhaps you're married."

He shook his head.

"No, you don't look married. And yet, Noll dear, you seem tired and worried. But that isn't always a sign of marriage." She laughed gaily. "Have you been working too hard and not taking care of yourself?"

"Oh, I'm all right," he replied stoutly; "some late nights, that's all."

She paused, still giving him a chance to say what she hoped to hear. Then, as he still remained silent, a deep blush surged over neck and face. What had she been doing flinging herself at the head of a man who didn't want her any

longer? What a mad fool she had been! The wine must have got into her head. Her first impulse was to rise and rush out of the restaurant. But that would make bad worse. She must go through with it with the best face possible. She need never see him again. She did not want to.

Their meal was almost finished. Oliver suggested a theater. That would be a relief from talk, at any rate; but somehow she would rather not.

"Do you want to go very much?" she asked.

"Not if you'd rather stay and talk. We can't sit all evening here, though. Let's go up to that café in Leicester Square. There is, or was, quite a good band there."

Oliver paid the bill and they went out.

She could not understand the perversity that made her choose what she wanted to avoid. Perhaps she had been too impetuous. If they sat a little longer together he might still speak. She should not have rushed him. And if his eyes spoke truly, he still loved her. She pinned her faith to that.

"It's nice to listen to the band," she said, as they sat down in the café. "It's ages since I had an evening out. I like to see the life round us, and to hear the music. Do you remember the evenings in the Park, Oliver?"

He stretched out one hand and pressed hers. He ordered coffee and cigarettes. It was a long time since he had tasted really good coffee or tobacco.

How he wished he were a cleverer man to find the right way out of this! It was sweet yet bitter to find their old way of life taken up so naturally, and yet with such differences. Well, tomorrow it would not matter.

Silence fell between them for a time. Suddenly he looked up at his companion. Her eyes were wet; she seemed to be shaken with some overpowering emotion. Again he let his hand steal across the table to take Lucy's tenderly.

"Dearest," he murmured, "tell me—what is it?"

She drew her hand away.

"Oh, I'm ridiculous; but I'm so glad—"

"Glad of what, Lucy?"

She hesitated. "Glad you're—better off than you were. Oh, don't think me a forward wretch! Oliver, do you still love me? I know you do. Your eyes tell me."

"Always," he said, "always."

"Then," she said shyly, "why—why—don't you— Oh, a woman can't say the first word—but perhaps you don't want me any longer."

"Always, Lucy, always."

He could not quite understand her long sigh of relief—of satisfaction.

"Happiness," he murmured, "such happiness! Oh, dearest, the years have been long—and hard; how hard I scarcely dare tell you."

"My darling," she said, leaning forward. "Don't hate me, please—"

"Hate you! Why should I hate you?"

"I have a confession to make. I have not told you quite the truth tonight. There was nothing after Faucett's—but disappointment, discouragement and at last—hunger. Oliver, it was sheer hunger drove me in there tonight. I could bear it no longer. I am penniless. Tomorrow I'll be homeless. I wondered as I passed there tonight whether you'd be in your old corner. The people I was expecting were all—a lie. Forgive me, dear. I was nearly fainting when I came in; but there you were and now it's all right—or it will soon be all right. When can you—when can we—" She stopped and looked down, blushing.

Torn this way and that, Flaunden tried to speak.

"Soon, soon," he stammered, "very soon. It seems incredible, dearest."

"You don't think," she asked with a spark of mischief, "that I'm marrying you for money? I should want you if you had nothing in the world. Do let us go now. I'm tired of the band and of 'Yip-I-addy-I-ay.' It seems so poor beside my happiness. Take me for a little drive in an old-fashioned hansom. I don't know when I was in a cab last—

and we can talk over things and arrange."

"Yes, let us go. We want to be out of the crowd, don't we?"

When Oliver paid the bill, he had just six shillings left. The hansom would make little less. Lucy must have what remained. She would need it tomorrow. Yet, how was he to offer her four shillings?

She herself found the way. In the cab she nestled close to him.

"How safe I feel, dearest," she whispered, "here with you again. It is worth all I have gone through. Tomorrow—where shall we meet? It is Sunday. Let me come to you early and we shall go off somewhere for the day. Do you know, I'll have to ask you for something to carry me along. I haven't even a bus fare to bring me to your door. But somehow I don't feel ashamed. I'm your wife already, am I not?"

He strained her to him in silence.

"You are my wife as much as ever you will be, dearest."

How curious it was that the grief and joy of the moment had taught him to speak in a way he had never thought of before! He was getting quite clever with his tongue—at the end of the journey. Well, the last miles were bright—in a way. Ought he to take courage for the fight again? But no; his spirit was too broken for that. Not even Lucy's kisses could teach him hope. Ought he to undeceive her? No; he could not bear to see her disappointment.

The cab stopped at Lucy's door in a shabby street.

"I'm so sorry, dear," he said; "I brought out very little money in my pocket tonight. Dear me, only six shillings! And two of these are for the cabman. I'm ashamed to offer you four—"

She laughed merrily. "That's riches, dearest; and there's tomorrow—and always— Shall I come at eleven o'clock? Is that too early? And where—the old rooms?"

"Why not come to Waterloo, Richmond platform?"

"At eleven, then; good night. Oh, I'm so happy!"

A long kiss and she was gone. At the door she turned and waved her hand to him.

"Back to Charing Cross," he told the man.

He pulled out the last of his cigarettes and lighted it. London streets and the late wayfarers seemed ghostly and unreal as the cab sped on. The rain was over, the stars came out in the rifts of driving cloud; again Oliver knew that the wind was very bitter. During the first part of the drive he had not felt the chill. Lucy was such a warm, comfortable being to have beside one. Lucy—what was to become of her? Oh, God, take care of her! Take care of her! But he prayed without hope or faith. He had been mocked, on this night of all nights. There was no God to pray to. He fell to cursing his own foolish pride. But for that—there might have been a tomorrow.

The cab stopped at Charing Cross.

Flaunden got out and paid the man. The driver turned over the coin critically and asked the usual mystified question. His victim quailed. Was he to be caught, helpless at such a time, in a squalid dispute? The gentleman in him rose in revolt. Ah, fortunately he had kept one thing jealously. He could never bring himself to pawn it. Hurriedly he drew off an old-fashioned signet ring.

"Take this," he said, and before the Jehu had recovered sufficiently to express his wonder in new blasphemies, Oliver was out of sight.

Just at the corner of Northumberland Avenue he stopped and looked around. The streets were almost empty. The night wind blew pitilessly, cutting him to the bone. Everything was unutterably dreary and desolate. About him the city lay like a desert.

He shivered; then, with a bitter laugh, he rallied his resolution and hurried down toward the river.



RAIN AND SUNSHINE

By Charles F. Lummis

IT rained today!

The sorrow of the Sky was on the Earth—
The mother tears, that of her pain
Give her flower children birth.
But oh, 'twas fair to me—
For I could hold a shield above thee
Against whatever might befall my Flower;
And shelter thee—God bless that rainy hour!
And whisper, "Ay, Belovéd, how I love thee!"
And underneath that little dripping roof
Was Home—for we were there together,
The world forgot, and all its outer weather.
The grayness of the day
Turned rosy with the dawning of thine eyes;
The mud along the city's way
Was mud for others, but our feet
Walked where the violets are sweet
And glory in our skies!

HALF-PORTIONS

By Melville Chater

POSSIBLY you may remember the poet of the Great White Way, who, being more familiar with lobster palaces than with the briny deeps, sang of that kingly crustacean:

Lo, where his scarlet cleaves the wave—
The Cardinal of the Seas!

We mention the lobster because, as any Broadway menu will tell you, he is conventionally served in halves; and that is our instance for substantiating a theory of life which we will call the Law of Half-Portions. The essence of it is that, whatever you may deem as your due at Fate's hands, her rule—converse to the custom of exclusive restaurants—is that she never serves *whole* portions. With infinite self-confidence you call for a small, hot Bird of Paradise, and she brings you but a longitudinal section of the same, severed (ominously, alas!) through the wishbone. You demand the Cup of Joy filled to overflowing, and she serves you a *demitasse*. The reason is, that if each of us got as much happiness as we think we deserve, there wouldn't be enough left to go around. Or say love. From lobsters to love is but a step. *Allons!*

Of course this does not mean that you are to mistake Esther Mishkovitch for a lobster fancier. Anyone who lives in an Orchard Street tenement and works on Sixth Avenue behind the Enormous Emporium's glove counter at \$4.50 per week is more likely to think of "lobster" as a vituperative epithet than as a seasonable delicacy. But the heart, as well as the palate, has its seasons. In proof whereof we chronicle Esther's extravagance, committed on that prime feast day of lovers, ignored by the calendar yet honored annually at boarding

schools, in art stationers' windows, and in the heart-throb columns of evening editions. You may be sure that on the night of February 13th Esther absorbed every line of Maude Maynard's "Chit-Chat Corner" stuff, which included a three-verse valentine, the burden whereof ran:

The crowded streets are a Milky Way,
And you are my Evening Star.

At first sight these words lifted themselves into Esther's heart and became dear to her. She knew exactly how it felt to regard life as a mass of blurred, drearily meaningless faces made yet more commonplace by the ever present memory of one bright, particular, hopelessly unattainable star. Yes, we have used the word advisedly. Esther was a star worshiper, if ever an eighteen-year-old girl who scraped together quarters for gallery seats and transformed her cracked mirror into a shrine for holding a stage hero's photograph—clipped from some magazine—justified the name. Time and again, leaning raptly forward from empyrean heights, had she beheld him foil vice, succor womankind and murmur the mellifluous words of love-at-first-sight—that incarnation of youth, chivalry and eternal romance, known on the billboards as Frank Siddell. Oh, happy Blanche Lorrimer, his leading lady! (They detested each other, of course, but Esther saw only the kisses.) Oh, much-to-be-envied supernumeraries on whom he shed the passing benediction of his smile! In her eyes he represented all that was good, true and noble—as anyone who has ever seen him make stage love will understand. To be near him, to serve him devotedly, humbly, without thought

of return—that was Esther Mishkovich's idea of life's Whole Portion.

Valentine's Day brought Esther not a single missive of the "heart, dart, plead, bleed, you, true" description, yet she cared little, being filled with the glory which is of giving, not receiving. At the lunch hour she slipped forth from the Enormous Emporium and paced up and down before a florist's window. Her pocketbook contained but one painfully saved dollar, and the flowers in the showcase looked alarmingly expensive—yet, love's will be done! She entered tremulously. Staring at her from amid the vine-bowered alcove was a clump of the most gorgeous red roses that Esther had ever seen. Each bloom rivaled the dimensions of a baseball, and its stem was hardly shorter than one of the dapper bamboos in the ring-the-canes booth at Coney Island.

"The Irish Beauty Special," said the proprietor, following her glance. "Twelve dollars a dozen."

When Esther had regained her breath she inquired timidly: "Could I—could I buy just one?"

"A dollar each," responded the proprietor.

Esther laid down her dollar bill. The man selected one of the gorgeous blooms and packed it in a long, slender, fern-lined box. Esther walked forth with the box under her arm, feeling as criminally extravagant as though she had dissipated the week's rent in soda water. That single red rose represented the price of four gallery seats—four blissful occasions of hero worship at the shrine of Frank Siddell—yet, love's will be done!

Fifteen minutes' walk brought Esther to the Grand Opera House, where, according to the posters, Frank Siddell was appearing in that heart-gripping drama, "Double-crossed." Within the lobby she tentatively faltered the magic syllables of his name to a tall, long-coated, cane-carrying man who stood with his back to her, lighting a cigarette.

"Yes?" he said, turning carelessly.

"What's this? Oh, something for me!"

Esther's heart seemed to stop beating.

It was Siddell himself, of the broad

shoulders, the clean-cut features and the deep, tender voice, who bent godlike above her.

"Someone asked me to leave it," stammered Esther, the lie showing as palpably scarlet on her downcast face as the crimson scarehead on an afternoon "Extra."

Siddell glanced from the gift to the giver. Then he smiled his famous, tenderly protective smile.

"Thanks, little girl," said he.

Now, Esther looked very pretty—a tempting little delicacy, as mere half portions go—and the lobby was quite deserted. Quickly he stooped over the downcast face; then Esther fled into the streets and away, her knees quaking, her heart surcharged with confusion, dog-like gratitude and chaotic bliss. Oh, joy! Oh, wonder! Oh, imperishable memory wherewith to sweeten the barren routine of life! For Frank Siddell had kissed her!

Whistling carelessly, Siddell opened the box and glanced at its contents. Long since had he grown callous to such tributes. He saw only the long-stemmed rose; he did not perceive the almost devotional impulse of girlish adoration which it symbolized. He was reflecting, in fact, that the incident might be worked up into a pretty little twenty-minute vaudeville sketch for his own use on the circuit next season. Then his fingers encountered a slip of paper which had been tucked in at one end of the box. Uncrumpling it, he read the girlish scrawl:

The crowded streets are a Milky Way,
And you are my Evening Star.

Suddenly a new, tender light crept into his eyes. He looked upward and sighed. Then his gaze wandered back to the rose, and for the first time he saw it as a rich, rare thing worthy to typify the one unique passion of a lifetime. Closing the box—which still contained, thanks to his absent-mindedness, the penned couplet—he stepped forth and hailed a taxicab. Within twenty minutes he alighted uptown before an apartment house and entered the elevator. "Third floor," announced the colored boy. There Siddell rang and was ad-

mitted to a front room. The portières parted, and once more he beheld her—his ideal of what constituted life's Whole Portion. Cora Ransom advanced, tall and statuesque, with proudly poised head and cold, imperturbable face.

"What have I to thank for this pleasant surprise?" she asked, with just a shade of hauteur in her crisp voice.

"That!" announced Siddell, pointing to the desk calendar, which marked February 14th. "You don't suppose," he added in soft reproach, "that, no matter how unjustly you've treated me, I'd let today go by without bringing you some token to remind you of my absolute—"

But before the tender devotion which so many women would have accepted with joy and pride Cora Ransom remained adamant.

"You must not," she interrupted with decision. "You know how often I have told you that there can never be anything of that kind between us. You have no right—"

"I have!" he cried. "I have the right of a man who has loved you with absolute integrity and single-heartedness for two years. You say your mission fills your life. Marry me, and I will relieve you of this newspaper hackwork so that you may pursue your suffragist propaganda undisturbed."

"You forget," she returned, "that today woman's platform is based on her economic independence of man. Unless I continue to be Maude Maynard—in other words, self-supporting—marriage would speedily place me in the barbarous position of a household chatel. But you do not subscribe to such ideas. If I married you it would mean, on your part, a constant self-sacrifice."

"And what is there that I would not sacrifice for you?" he exclaimed. "Toward others I am hard, selfish. You, and only you, wake in me all that is noblest and best. Of such a love as mine most men are incapable: it comes but once a lifetime. All the other women in the world mean nothing to me: they are nonentities, an indistinguishable mass, a Milky Way of faces. You

are the one bright burning star—my Evening Star!"

Her color changed. "Where did you get that?" she demanded. "I mean," she quickly corrected herself, "where did you get such an absurd idea of me? In reality, I am cold, selfish, unresponsive—over-intellectualized, perhaps—quite incapable of such feelings as you express. If you would let me be your friend—"

A look of inexpressible pain quivered on Siddell's face. He bowed his head and turned to go. Cora's realization of her absolute ascendancy over him smote her heart with charitable pity.

"I'm sorry to hurt you," she began gently, touching his arm.

At that, he caught her hands and, drawing her close to him—Well, woman's pity is treacherous at best; and then the thing came so suddenly—as she afterward told herself—that of course she couldn't have prevented it. What she said after ten seconds was:

"This is not fair. You have no right—Please go. Yes, I mean it."

And Frank Siddell went, issuing upon the pavement light-footed as with Mercury's sandals, light-hearted as with Eros's shoulder pinions. Oh, mellow fore-visions of Spring's pageantry of star-sprinkled flower-beds, twittering sparrows and newly uniformed policemen! Oh, wonders and wild desires! Oh, *gloria mundi*! For he had kissed Cora Ransom.

A kiss more or less did not seriously disturb Miss Ransom, however. She merely resumed what Frank Siddell's entrance had interrupted, which was the manicuring of her finger nails.

"Very foolish of me!" she reflected. "Now I shall have to begin disillusioning him all over again—and I almost had him trained, too. What a nuisance these insistent ones are!"

Presently she opened the long, slender box that lay on the table, and drew forth Siddell's tribute. As she gazed on the glorious crimson bloom, so rich with subtly breathed significance to her womanly and therefore symbol-loving nature, a tender smile dawned on her lips, her eyes grew soft with dreams.

"Poor Frank!" she sighed. And then—so bafflingly complex are the workings of a woman's heart—she seated herself at the desk and seized upon pen and notepaper.

"I have tried so hard"—thus she wrote at the white heat of impulsiveness—"so unremittingly, to conceal from myself, as well as from you, all you have come to mean to me; but each ensuing encounter renders silence the more hopelessly impossible. Yes, I have forgotten shame, reserve—everything, except that into my cool, white temple of dreams you have entered and revealed yourself as the divinity for whom I have been expectantly tending the sacred altar flame all these long years. Few women are capable of such a passion. It is the one glorious bloom of a lifetime. On my desk lie letters from other men, expressions of their devotion. But they mean nothing to me; all the world of faces means nothing, save only yours. As I wrote in my last night's column:

"The crowded streets are a Milky Way,
And you are my Evening Star.

"Oh, if everyone could know that it was written in your praise! If I could but cry aloud the glorious pride of my soul to all the world, 'I love Stuyvesant Van Diemen'!"

Having filled eight closely written sheets with the tenderest outpourings of which a woman, swayed by her love's utter selflessness, ever made noble acknowledgment, Cora Ransom did what, of course, she had intended to do from the first—namely: she tore up the letter into fine shreds. Yes, the contents of the Dead Letter Office would seem as innocuous as a novel of the School of Nothing Doing could we but find our way to that ancient and overcrowded depository, the office of never-sent letters.

And so, instead of penning her valentine, Cora wrapped up the box containing that eloquent symbol, the one rich, red bloom, directed it in a feigned hand to Mr. Stuyvesant Van Diemen at a sonorous sounding address on Fifth Avenue, and sent for a messenger boy.

An hour later she pronounced an open-

sesame into the telephone receiver, and presently said:

"I want Mr. Van Diemen. Yes, it's important. Oh, is this you, Mr. Van Diemen? This is Miss Ransom, speaking from the *Evening Sphere* office. I've been assigned to interview you about the social work you're doing on the East Side. Can you spare me half an hour? At five o'clock, then. Thank you."

Now speed we sparklike along the wires and behold Mr. Van Diemen in his study overlooking Fifth Avenue. On the walls hang the portraits of his ancestors, ranging from Jacobus Van Diemen, who bought Eastchester County from the Indians for thirty pounds of glass beads and a barrel of whiskey, to Rufus Van Diemen, who bought up railroad systems with stock certificates instead of glass beads, and water instead of whiskey. Stuyvesant is a prematurely old looking young man with the listless, melancholy air of one who has never had anything to play with except a few poor scores of inherited millions. He is inspecting a long, slender box which has just been left by a messenger boy.

"Shall I call up the police, sir," asks the manservant, respectfully apprehensive, "or soak it in water myself?"

As the jaded young millionaire unwraps the box the momentary light of adventure dies out of his face. "No, it isn't a bomb," he says listlessly, almost peevishly, revealing a single red rose, one more addition to his surfeit of valentines. Left alone, he discovers, tucked among the ferns, a slip of paper whereon is written:

The crowded streets are a Milky Way,
And you are my Evening Star.

Suddenly his eyes flash fire. Once again he picks up the rose—this time with the caressing hands that are laid upon a sacred thing—and murmurs tenderly, rapturously:

"She sent it! Yes, it's from her!"

At five o'clock Miss Ransom was announced. Wearing the impenetrable masks with which we moderns are able to screen our profoundest emotions, these two sat *tête-à-tête* for an hour, chatting of East Side social work, with not

an untoward swirl ruffling the smooth current of impersonal colloquy. Her mission fulfilled, Miss Ransom rose to go. As she gave Van Diemen her hand at parting, there flashed into her eyes that veiled glance, half submissive, half challenging, which is the involuntary caress of a devoted woman. Van Diemen's hand tightened upon hers. With quick tenderness he bent above her, and—

And the manservant who ushered her forth wondered at her bright cheeks; and the boy from whom she bought a newspaper marveled at the happy ring of her voice. Yes, wayfarers half turned, heartened by the sight of her joyously uptossed head, glad eyes and radiant smile. Oh, dazzling world, transfigured with the glory of life's Whole Portion momentarily revealed! Oh, silvery laughter of the kind gods! For Stuyvesant Van Diemen had kissed her!

To Mr. Van Diemen, however, the world looked precisely as it had looked five minutes before. His was the mildly regaled sensation of one who has just toyed with the *hors-d'œuvre*. He put his feet on the sofa and lighted a cigarette.

"Nice girl, Miss Ransom," he murmured nonchalantly. "She'd be quite pretty if it wasn't for her nose. Fairly dared me to kiss her, by George! Oh, well, everything goes on St. Valentine's Day!"

Picking up the sheet of paper wherein the florist's box had been wrapped, he noticed that it had originally covered some purchase from a department store, and that it still displayed the name and address of Miss Cora Ransom. The truth flashed upon him.

"So *she* sent it!" he muttered. "And I thought, I hoped—poor fool—that it was from— Bah!"

And he kicked the pasteboard box across the room with profound disgust.

That evening the Neighborhood Home, an uptown settlement house in which Mr. Van Diemen was a zealous volunteer worker, gave a fancy dress dance, and he was among the onlookers. At eleven thirty o'clock he stood on the curb handing a young girl into the dark depths of his closed limousine.

"Nonsense!" he reassured her as they rolled away side by side. "Of course it's perfectly proper. I wouldn't dream of allowing you to go all that way home alone at such an hour and in such a dress. By the way, what does your costume represent?"

"The Queen of Hearts," she replied. "Didn't you notice all the little red hearts sewed onto it?"

"The Queen of Hearts, of course!" he responded. "Ah, yes! You were born to be a queen and to have the fealty of all the hearts about you—mine among the rest. Listen, dear Queen of Hearts! From the moment I first saw you, a year ago, life became transfigured; I grew aware of nobler ends and aims than mere self-enjoyment; I took up settlement work merely to be near you, to show you what your influence was accomplishing. Ah, don't distrust my wealth, the difference in our stations! Remember that but few men are capable of such a love as mine, that it is the unique flower of a lifetime. The world of faces mean nothing to me; they are a dim, indistinct mass, the Milky Way of Humanity. You hang far above them and alone, my bright, pure Evening Star!"

The streets shot by, growing narrower and dimmer as the car whirled southward, penetrating the city's more congested quarters. Beneath Van Diemen's passionate declaration the young girl shrank mutely back into her dark corner. Never before had she heard such words, and their quivering tenderness seemed to thrill her with a thousand conflicting emotions for which she could find no speech.

"I won't press you for an answer tonight, my darling," said Van Diemen gently as the car halted alongside of the curb. "But here's something that has been standing on my desk all afternoon. It's so beautiful and rare that whenever my eye caught it I instinctively thought of you. Take it—and dream of me!"

He reached across to the flower holder and handed the girl its contents, a rich, red, long-stemmed rose. As her fingers clasped the beautiful thing and her face lowered to inhale its fragrant breath, Van Diemen, too, bent over, and in an

access of tenderness drew her lips to his. Next moment she was mounting a steep flight of tenement-house stairs.

"Poor old guy!" she yawned. "Even if he was a working-feller I wouldn't marry him, at that. I suppose I ought to have sidetracked the kissing business, but he got so excited I really felt kind of sorry for him."

Entering her tiny room, she laid the

rose, as an oblation, before her cracked mirror which, shrinelike, held a man's photograph, clipped from some magazine. Then she stooped tenderly and kissed the photograph, little realizing that at that moment Mr. Van Diemen, deliriously in love with life, was murmuring a rapturous pæan to the uttermost stars. For had he not kissed Esther Mishkovitch?



MINE UTMOST HOUR

By Charles Hanson Towne

WHEN down some shining sunset I shall pass,
No longer of this world or its alarms,
But one of that great host beneath the grass,
Who are enfolded in the earth's warm arms;

I wonder if my lips will really be
Mute as they seem to you who view my face,
Or if my voice will rise exultantly
The instant that I reach Death's unknown place?

Shall I not join in that great hymn of earth,
My song not lost in the wild winds of God?
Yea, I shall sing in my untrammelled birth
When the rain sings above the burgeoning sod;

And I shall chant when night hangs o'er the sea,
Nor lie in silence, breathless in the ground;
My voice shall tremble in His symphony,
Adding *Laudates* to the mighty sound;

And I shall show my face in some strange flower
When June's hushed secret is made known to me;
And ye who live beyond mine utmost hour
Will say I sleep beneath the hawthorn tree.



SHE—A penny for your thoughts.
POPULAR AUTHOR—My price is ten cents a word.

TOYS FOR GASPARD

By Kendrick Scofield

GASPARD, sometime free rover of the Lorraine byways, endured the evil bowels of the steerage for twelve dismal days. Vagabond fiddler though he was, loving the freedom of life, he suffered himself to the man pens of Ellis Island. Then he, to whom the forests and winds had been friends of his heart, cast himself, an alien, into the crucible where bits of all the nations are fused into refined American citizenship.

It had hurt him to leave the roving life. He shut his teeth down hard on the tug of the tempter wind, and on the ache for the life he had known. He set his face to become an American, whatever the cost. He was as rich ore.

Mignon, a child-woman, came with him. Shy and shrinking, a daughter of the opens, she, too, followed and endured. Mignon suffered more, perhaps, than the man. Life in America alone would mean nothing to her. Gaspard was everything to her: love, loyalty, home, devotion. Of the fine toys he called citizenship and freedom, to be found, he said, in stifling cities across seas, she knew nothing. Yet she came with him to the crucible, and was as the slag which is found even where rich ore abounds.

Men who study such things have said that there is much of tragedy in the fierce blast which keeps the cauldron of the New World bubbling, and that creed and custom and even patriotism are largely relative. But neither Gaspard nor Mignon would have known what these men were talking about, even if they had been told.

And that makes their story.

"For the last time I am to wear the raiment of Lorraine," Gaspard observed

ruefully. Eight months of New York were bearing their fruit. Gaspard was now a layman in the school of Western convention.

He turned in his chair toward the slender girl-woman who was removing the thick white dishes from the red print-covered table.

"Tomorrow, Mignon," he continued, "I shall be a union man. Here, those of the musicians who play in the theaters must dress as you may have seen the waiters dress when we have passed the windows of the cafés in Paris. So I must dress now."

The man stretched his long velveteen-clad legs before him and eyed them. There was something of small tragedy in his gaze.

"In Lorraine—even in Paris—art is art; in New York, art is—what do they call it?—an 'open face suit.'" He smiled at his newly acquired adeptness in the American idiom.

Gaspard's words meant nothing to Mignon. She did not in the least understand, yet she ceased humming the *patois* song which was on her lips. Whenever Mignon hummed, it was the same song. As in the forests of France, so in the East Side tenement, she hummed the pixie air with which Gaspard had fiddled his way into her heart one night in a far-away Lorraine tavern.

Now when the graphophone owned by the Italian family downstairs rasped out the latest musical Americanisms, all of which Gaspard whistled badly, the girl closed her ears and hummed the air which she had brought with her from the old life.

The man watched her as she moved about.

"Nor is the matter of clothes all," he went on, as he rose and walked across the room to a little shelf on which a new varnished wooden pipe lay beside one of huge porcelain bowl, which had been his constant companion in vagabondage. But he picked up the new pipe and stuffed it full of heavy shag tobacco, before he sat down again.

"Have you thought that we should go before the priest?" he asked.

The girl crossed to him. She smiled indulgently and patted his cheek with her long brown fingers when he grimaced at the bite of the new pipe.

"Why the haste, Gaspard? I am pleased that you should wish it—but the years we have in which to marry! Do I need to bind you to hold you? What difference? We of course shall marry if you wish it."

"*Voilà, ma petite,*" the man chaffed—"this is not Lorraine. There I fiddle in a tavern, dressed as pleases me, and you play the zither. In New York I cannot play until I wear clothes like a waiter and become one of the union."

Mignon began wiping a thick dish vigorously. "We are of the forests of France," she said proudly.

"We are to become Americans. You understand?" Gaspard urged. "No price must be too great to pay, nothing too hard to do. America has invited us to become of herself—citizens. Only today I said to Bolaris, the 'cellist downstairs: 'Have I not a pretty bird in my nest to care for me?' 'Faugh!' he replied. 'No priest gave her to you!' After I had knocked Bolaris down, he made me understand that I must join, as he says it, the husbands' union."

Mignon's eyes glowed, and she breathed faster.

"Always you will fight for me?" she questioned. That was her test of his love, and she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Always," he said. "But listen. I have rented a room for you in another *pension*. You must go there while I pay you what the Americans call 'flirt.' This is March. In June, when the theater is closed, we will go upon the

American honeymoon. Then who shall say we are wrong?"

A hunted look came into the woman's eyes. "I could not leave you, Gaspard. Never, not for one day. Never till you drive me from you with blows, and then I will come back, even then. *Non, non*—we will marry, if you wish it, tomorrow; why wait?"

Gaspard had learned well his first lessons in the customs of America. So he said:

"We may not marry tomorrow. When I wished to become a union man, the musicians did not give me a card for weeks. Is not marriage but a union here? In the forests we ask but that the heart be true; here, *ma chère*, much is thought of the manner. Would we be unworthy citizens?"

"But I will not go," the woman rebelled.

Gaspard did not reply. He rose and took from their boxes all her small possessions. Her ribbons and bits of cheap cherished finery he carefully wrapped up. He left only one of her small belongings outside of the bundle. That was a tintype of himself that a Coney Island photographer had taken.

Mignon had abandoned the dishes. She watched him apathetically until he began to fasten the bundle. Then, with a stricken little cry, she snatched the tintype from its place on the cheap yellow dresser and tried to thrust it into the bosom of her dress.

The man saw. Gently disengaging her hands, he restored the picture to its place, but did not notice that, reflected over his shoulder in the wavy mirror, her eyes betrayed distrust. When he again turned to her, Mignon's face revealed nothing but humility and obedience. She had for the first time dissembled. Elemental Gaspard, a bit bewildered by the thing he was doing, could not divine that Mignon's was the obedience of a scolded child.

And so he said gently:

"It is not proper that you should have a man's picture before he has called on you and proposed marriage. On our wedding day you shall have it again."

"On our wedding day! *Mon Dieu!*"

This was a monstrous, unbelievable thing. He was cruel. And she had been so faithful.

She held back her sobs as she followed Gaspard down the long flights of tenement steps and out into the street. Gaspard stalked ahead of her. He was happy, for he was becoming a good citizen.

Mignon had been away from him for a whole day. Gaspard pattered aimlessly around the two little rooms. He found some cold meat and ate a frugal meal. Then he went to seek Mignon.

He found her in tears, but she sprang to meet him with a glad little cry, and in a moment he was enveloped in her strong young arms, while the strands of her coppery hair brushed his face, and her swimming eyes were very near his own. Shaken by emotion, his resolve tottered for a moment, but urged on by the voice of allegiance to a new life, he stood firm.

"Non, *mam'selle*," he chided. "This is but my first visit to you. I have not yet asked you to be my wife."

He led her to a chair, and found one for himself. As he sat facing her, strangely ill at ease, his hands, that had long been used to straying through her hair, lay awkwardly idle, and then clutched uneasily at the arms of his chair. Finally he thrust them into the pockets of his cheap new American coat.

"You are cruel, Gaspard!" the woman cried suddenly. "It has been a whole day since you made me leave you—a day of *misère*; and you do not kiss me. Why have you worn your new clothes?" she demanded with unreasoning jealousy. "Those you have not worn since we went to Coney Island, and this is but Sunday, a night for prayer and love." Her voice sank almost to huskiness. "Is it that—tell me—tell me there is no other woman!"

"No one but you," he assured her. "But, ah, I had forgotten. Such things I must not say on my first visit, nor yet on my second. I took my first citizen's papers today," he went on proudly. "I have talked much with my friend Bolaris, and he tells me that no Ameri-

can, such as I shall be, should hurriedly make a proposal and marry."

The girl was silent. But Gaspard babbled on of that thing uppermost in his mind, his new found toy of citizenship. It was all a very serious and important matter, and he must make no mistakes.

An unaccustomed feeling of restraint came over them, and after an hour of vain effort at ease, Gaspard left her.

"The first visit should not be long, says the book on courtship which I have bought," he said, to justify himself as he saw the tears come to Mignon's eyes. What would it matter? It would all be over soon. And he would be a good citizen.

The days merged into weeks, and the weeks dragged wearily into a month. Mignon, at such infrequent times as he saw her, or called to leave a little sum for her expenses, sat dumb. Her big eyes had grown larger, and her wind-tanned cheeks were showing pale yellow under the skin. Yet Gaspard hardly noticed.

"I will wait even longer before asking her to be my wife," he told himself as he sat alone in the now disordered tenement rooms. Twice he had come home and found them tidy and clean. He guessed that Mignon had come during the day, and so he straightway forbade her to do it again. "I must satisfy Bolaris and my new friends," he thought.

So it was that those who stood before the stage entrance of a downtown theater on a rainy afternoon following a rehearsal, observed a frail little woman who vainly sought for a face among the men who came out, until a tall fellow bearing a violin beneath his arm emerged from the narrow door. She rushed to meet him.

He comforted her, as he left her at her door. "I will come to you tomorrow," he said. "It will be all right now."

He would make a good citizen's wife of Mignon. When Gaspard left the theater the next night he was happy. In his pocket was a long envelope containing the State's permission for him to take a wife. All the barriers that

custom had raised would fall, and he would have Mignon again.

"I will ask her tonight. The demands of custom at last have been satisfied," he said to himself.

But Mignon was not in her room. She had gone, said the janitress. She had taken everything, and had left no address.

Gaspard was in a daze; he took no heed of the direction of his steps. One thing only could he grasp: the girl had not understood.

At last he found himself at his own lodgings again. Mechanically he mounted until he stood before the door. He tried to open it. Again and again he turned and rattled the knob, too distraught to think of the key in his pocket. Then he braced against the door the shoulders which had been the pride of all the wide Lorraine vagabondage, and the lock tore from its hold.

He plunged into the room. The semi-darkness of the place reeked of a strange stupefying atmosphere. For a moment the fumes of gas bore him down, but he staggered to his feet, clutching at the bed, across which lay a crumpled heap of white.

For a moment, sunk in the fear of death, he made no move. Then he leaped to the window. The cold, revivifying air flowed in, and Gaspard turned off an open gas jet. Holding the girl's body through the window, he called loudly for help.

In Bolaris's room, below, they gently chafed the girl's hands. The physician from across the street, called by Bolaris, drove his hypodermic needle into her firm brown forearm, and at last Mignon's breathing became apparent.

Gaspard walked to the street beside the stretcher carried by the white-uniformed orderly and the young doctor. As they lifted their light burden into the ambulance, Gaspard took the limp hand into his own and tried to slip a little gold circlet upon one of the fingers.

But a hairy, freckle-mottled hand fell on his shoulder. He was jerked roughly to one side, and the curious who had gathered surged between him and the ambulance.

Knots of muscle suddenly bunched under Gaspard's ill fitting coat. Rage almost stopped his breath. He crouched, that he might turn and spring. Then, through the red of his rage, he saw that the hand came from a sleeve which was blue, with gold bands about it.

It was the arm of a police sergeant, a hated *gendarme*, who stood for law, order, custom. The new cloak of convention dropped from Gaspard like a husk. The rage was upon him again. He struck out wildly and turned with a supple twist that came back to him from the Lorraine days of fight and frolic. He was free of the policeman's grasp. Then he rushed again in blind, insensate fury at the sergeant, not knowing that he was really tearing and striking at the things that he had sacrificed so much for—those things which had also made possible the tragedy which had so nearly entered his life. So he fought in maddened snapping rushes, backing away only to fling himself again, fighting as the big Norman wolves fight. He was elemental. He was like a child who destroys the object by which he chances to be hurt—and in such destruction finds satisfaction.

But the nightstick of the policeman crashed on him. Gaspard went to his knees, and the little gold wedding band fell upon the sidewalk and tinkled as it rolled away.

Gaspard dragged himself to his feet. The big policeman was already busy again pushing back the crowd. Gaspard leaned, sick, against a tree, while the gong clanged and the ambulance clattered off.

Gaspard, with the red not yet gone from his eyes, drew from his pocket his union card. He gazed at it strangely fascinated, for suddenly he realized that its talismanic power had gone. He could see the long rows of tenements, fetid and garish, and he hated them. He could hear the rattle of the elevated train, and it fell harshly upon his ear.

"*Dieu!*" he groaned. "How I hate it all! New York would have killed you, Mignon," and Gaspard—vagabond—no longer good citizen—tore the card

to fragments. He hurled them from him in a white shower, and spat.

Into the insensate rage of him was borne the sound of a steamer's siren. It took his thoughts back suddenly to the day when he and Mignon had first set foot on the shore of this new country.

"We were happy, fresh from the taverns and the woods," he said aloud. "The steamer will be sailing back."

Then he noticed that he was not alone.

The physician stood beside him; he turned Gaspard's head to examine the welt left by the policeman's stick.

"When will she be well?" Gaspard asked.

"She will recover," said the doctor. "It will not be long."

"I have a message I must give her," said Gaspard. "The steamer told me something just now: that Lorraine is wide; that she wants us—for our honeymoon."



THE HARMONY OF THE SPHERES

By Blanche Elizabeth Wade

WHEN once we feel at home in air as well as on the earth,
We'll help to plan the planets so there'll be no lack of mirth.
The serious to Sirius we'll banish first of all,
While hermits of a solitary turn may turn to Sol.

Now stupid people need not be the very least annoyed,
If asked to dwell with other donkeys on some asteroid.
And as for lunatics and such, to Luna let them go.
For bores, Aurora Borealis surely won't be slow.

The Jews on Jupiter must live, or pay the highest tolls,
And I am sure that we can get the polar star for Poles.
The fishermen will like old Neptune best—don't ask me why;
You'll understand when once you see them troll the mackerel sky.

Our noble martial forces can be placed upon old Mars,
While actor folk will feel at home, I know, among the stars.
And, by the way, for sportsmen skilled, the shooting stars will do,
And circus folk will take to Saturn's rings right quickly, too.

Soft drinks in plenty will be sold along the Milky Way,
And there we'll meet the meteors by night and also day.
Then con the constellations, and you'll tell by telescope,
That when we feel at home in air, there'll be no cause to mope.



CRAWFORD—What was the surprise about the Christmas present your wife gave you?

CRABSHAW—I found she took the money out of my pocket to buy it.

PESSIMISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

By Benjamin Arstein

HONESTY may be the best policy, but the average man will tell you that the premiums are almost prohibitive.

The way of the transgressor *was* hard until the advent of limousines and railway parlor cars.

Sin finds some folks out—having the time of their lives spending its wages.

Every man may become the architect of his fortune, but most men would consider themselves fortunate if they could master the art of building a curb for their desires.

Most troubles can be settled by compromise except the compromising letter.

Fortune smiles at some men—but the man who marries a woman whose face is her fortune usually discovers that she smiles mostly at other men.

A man seldom realizes the true meaning of a "dead line" until he is called to face the line of moral duty.

Any man can adjust himself to the matrimonial harness—the trouble is usually experienced in the checkrein.

The world is loth to give quarter to the man who does things by halves.

The woman who attempts to mend a man's ways usually succeeds in ruffling her disposition.

The assertion that the age of chivalry has passed can't be substantiated—the trouble is usually due to the age of the woman.



"SIR," remarked the weary wayfarer, "mine is indeed a sad story."
"I'm afraid we can't use it," replied the absent-minded magazine editor.
"Can't you let us have something humorous?"

THE HANDS HE HELD

By John Fleming Wilson

THEY stood very close together under the shaded lamp in the hallway, she with her lit eyes for the moment cast downward, he staring gladly at her dusky hair. "I can't kiss you till you tell me something," she whispered.

"Bargains already?" he laughed. "And you told me in your note that it was 'yes.'"

She lifted her glance for one flying second to meet his gaze. "It is 'yes'; but even if I do"—her voice was a mere glimmer of the word—"love you—there is more, Billy. I'm awfully old and—wise. To love you is one thing; to be your wife is another. Oh, I must know whether I am *first*."

William Herron's smile grew tenderer. "Of course you are first, Nellie. Haven't I told you so often?"

She drew a bit nearer to him. "Always first, or only first—*now*?"

"I've never loved any other girl as I do you," he said simply.

She slipped her hands out of his with a slight and indefinable withdrawal of her whole self. "Let us speak plainly," she said, quite clearly. "Was there another girl?"

He parried the question with, "What do you mean?"

"I mean this," she said hurriedly: "Did you ever hold another girl's hands as you've held mine and—and kiss her?"

The stillness in the hallway seemed to deepen about them. William Herron smiled to himself a little bitterly. But the great need he felt for the woman so close to him stiffened his resolve to win her completely but openly. "Yes," he answered presently.

She stepped back and smiled at him inscrutably. "Then I would like to hear about—the hands you held. I know I have little right to inquire into *her* story. But, Billy, I have every right to know about *your* life—before I give mine into your keeping." Her brilliant eyes clouded. "But," she breathed, "make it as—as easy as you can for—me. Just the hands you held! No more!"

Again the silence was as if it dripped about them, as if the slow ticking of the great clock on the landing were the sound of each drop falling steadily and irrevocably upon their joy. And very gently Nellie Martin drew back from the light into the shadow. From the obscurity she called to her lover: "Don't tell me about *her*; tell me about her hands—that you held!"

"She didn't wear any rings on them," he said slowly.

"Oh!"

"And she held them out across the white bed cover to me when she heard my step," he went on, staring at the rug.

"She was sick?" she whispered.

He did not answer at once, but seemed to be recalling the moment. Then he laughed. "You want to know only about the hands?"

She nodded mutely.

"Well, they were—very little. They were young hands, quite little and gentle and tender. They were homesick hands. They had stretched out for many other hands and—been drawn back."

"Oh!"

"The fingers," he went on more loudly, "were slender and pink-tipped

and—and trembled. Then she—I mean the left hand—held out the fourth finger separate for—a ring. She held out two hands, the left hand with the finger held out gently for the ring."

There was no sound but the ticking of the clock in the shadow above the woman. So he went on, more quietly:

"I took the hands held out to me and they cuddled into mine. Palm to palm her hands spoke to my hands. I listened, and slowly they—"

"Oh!"

"Yes, very slowly they drew me closer and closer, and then—"

"Tell me only of the hands!" Nellie cried from the dusk.

"They were the hands of a woman that loved," he responded quietly.

"You?"

"My hands," was the low reply. "It was her two hands seeking two other hands—to hold them and keep them while—"

"While what?" she demanded, stepping forward.

"While—until—until death came."

Nellie Martin's voice was curiously sweet as she said: "And there was no ring on the—the fingers?"

"None."

"And the—hands drew you closer?" she whispered.

"Until my hands rested on her breast."

"And—and then?" she sobbed.

"She—the hands grew cold and died."

Nellie Martin swept forward, pallid-faced. "Ah! You loved her!"

He bowed his head and muttered: "No, only the hands. They were so small and tender and slender-fingered. And they drew me closer."

"But you—you kissed—"

"The hands," he said sternly.

For a moment they met each other's eyes. Then Nellie Martin laughed. "You might as well tell me more. Who was—whose were the hands?"

"I don't know," he said dully. "No one knew. She—the hands died, and that was all."

"But they died held in yours!"

"Yes," he said bitterly, "they died in mine. They died just as your hands have but now died in mine. And I went away—as I am going now." He put his hand out for the doorknob. The door swung gently to after him. She sprang for it and tore it open and rushed out into the chill night air and held out her hands.

"Billy!" she cried.

He looked up from the pavement at her white face and her outstretched hands. His mouth was hard and set.

"Come back!" she whispered.

"Come back and hold my hands. Don't let them die, Billy! Come back!"

And as he came slowly up the steps he saw the fourth finger of her left hand held separate from the rest, slender and white and maidenly.



"WHY can't he make things go?"
"He hasn't any push."



THE right man never kisses a girl against her will.



WHEN women tell their age it's generally a historical romance.

FROM BED AND BOARD

By Hildric Davenport

DIVORCE—magic word—the most notorious in the language! In the vocabulary of folly, how many synonyms it has: novelty—variety—opportunity.

What does it whisper to you, O credulous? Of a Nirvana for the chain and ball gang—the wedded? Of Empyrean heights, easy of ascent? Of the Delectable Isles of Dreams come true? Or—tell it not in Gath; breathe it softly with a blush in the voice—does it spell soul mate—affinity?

Ye desirers for decrees, yearn open-eyed. As one pays for one's life with one's death, and for everything in like ratio, it follows that the Adjuster does not give exclusive excursion rates to divorcees.

Ye ennuied of marital monotony, step out of your prison house and slip your hand into that of Fate's Puppet, who has come to the parting of the ways. Note well how anxiously she sums up the *pros* and *cons*—how apprehensively she counts the cost in her tragic sum in latter day arithmetic. Finally, when she has made the decision, look with her to the *modus operandi*—follow the trek to the Unholy Grail.

Instinct leads us away from familiar eyes for the accomplishment of certain ends—not that we would admit even to ourselves that we transgress—still, race memories are long; locked doors have their uses. As wounded animals crawl into out-of-the-way corners, so victims of the matrimonial Juggernaut retire to distant States of the Cupid Couchant.

How difficult is the Puppet's journey westward! *En route* introspection claims her for its own; she muses pensively. In some vague way she seems

to miss something—when one is suddenly deprived of even one's tortures one feels a sense of loss, of privation. And though one's shackles have chafed and hampered, freed abruptly from them one is like a creature who has been in a plaster cast—unsure of one's first movements. Alas, the bits of cork in the wine of life!

Five sadly contemplative days pass by, and behold—the Garden of Bleeding Hearts! It is all but hidden from sight behind Eternal Hills—which is well, for it has caused more tragedies than it has cured; it is an alluring coquette with everything to offer—nothing to give.

Ah, the eloquence of the Sierras! They symbolize life—they are ever changing under the shade of the fleeting of the clouds as our lives are eternally altering in the shadow of the passing of our fates. Now blurred, now clear cut *en silhouette*, they have reared themselves in fantastic groups reaching into the azure. Here cloud-ridden, deep, mystic, purple with regal melancholy; there sun-enveloped, radiant, happily beaming, fit playgrounds for frisking gnomes and fairy oreads. How the hills show one up to oneself in one's true pigmy size! They do not permit any squinting along oblique angles; they snatch off one's blinders; they give one the Larger Vision.

A little wind moans plaintively. What does it chant so mournfully? "*Mea culpa, mea culpa.*" The Puppet shivers. She begins to wonder uneasily if it might have been her own lack of skill that brought forth jangling discord as she smote upon the harp of life. Maybe she had not striven to attain the deft touch that would have evoked music from the

flesh and blood instrument which Destiny had assigned her to play upon. If so, why had she been left in ignorance of the fact? Because, and pity 'tis, beneath the roar of humanity's fetich, flattery, the still small voice of Sincerity is as the twitter of a sparrow in a cyclone.

There in the far West, among mountain cathedrals, the atrophying soul has a chance to air itself—to try its unused wings. The artificialities of past environments have never shown the Puppet to herself. Her treasure house, hidden so deep in her mystic spirit, has been unexplored; but now Nature takes her into a Holy of Holies, closes the door and leaves her alone—alone and afraid—to confront her Other Self. Away from prying eyes, divested of conventionality, how chill is her nakedness! What an impenetrable gulf is Individual Being—how violent its solitary struggles!

In the shadow of majesty the Puppet feels the immensity of largeness. As beneath a sharp blow she reels under a sudden sense of the utter insignificance, the triviality of her tragedy—she is becoming aware of herself, emerging from the chrysalis state of the average woman—than which there is nothing more stultifying—that of self-pity. She is realizing that, like the Danaides, she has been carrying a sieve to the well-springs.

A chill fear breathes coldly upon her—in retrospection, her bondage, like far-away fields, takes on a tender hue. She looks back almost with longing. (Ah, the live wires of memory!) Perchance the cry of her starved soul may have been but the whining of selfishness. Her hunger for more love was only the demands of vanity; her need of companionship, her own lack of response; the emptiness, an overdose of leisure, may be because she refused to put her hand to life's plow. Now she has perspective, she is clear-visioned. The past is not altogether black. What is horribly dark is the future. She strains affrighted eyes; she feels pitiably terrified like a little child alone in the night.

There was never a woman cast up by fate's whirlpool on that bleak shoal but

longed to creep back into the shelter of wifehood.

"Go back," counsel the hills. But there is no going back—life shoves us on its highway.

Has the Puppet burned her bridges? If not, according to her caliber she returns whence she came, though vanquished a conqueror—or she passes on into Divorcedom, too often a conqueror vanquished.

"Step lively, Destiny's Toy, out of the murk of your smoldering bridges," whispers Necessity. So as the twilight falls grayly she steals into the City of Lost Illusions.

As best she may she gets through the Purgatory separating the Hades of Wedlock from the Heaven of Freedom. When first venturing forth in Divorce Land, she arrays herself with an ostentatious simplicity and envelops herself in aggressive demureness. Rubbing elbows with her sex, she marvels much—how dare Plain Face relinquish a husband in the hand? May the Painted Lady induce another to take a chance? Shall the Sere and Yellow lasso a second? Does the Fat Dame picture her billowing charms behind future coffee pots? Has the feminine edition of the Ancient Mariner acquired a modern Methuselah?

The galaxy is truly heterogeneous. Silks and satins jostle tatters and rags. The commonalty sneers at the aristocracy; there are artists and artisans, musicians and mechanics, actors and academicians, journalists and journey-men, philosophers and philanderers, millionaires and milliners, Bohemians and Belgravians, pariahs and paragons. The little town is alive with them. They greet one at every turn. They manicure and massage; they sell one chapeaux or challis, boots or beds, drugs or dictionaries, fruits or flowers, necessities or necklaces. And always they beam upon one with a sympathetic joy. Their air of *camaraderie* causes one to search oneself for a brand, a hallmark; though invisible to the introspective eye, there exists an intangible something, an air at once furtive, surreptitious, clandestine and yet brazenly demure.

One passes a dreamy-eyed señora from sunny Spain, a *chic* Parisienne or two, even a butter-haired, blue-eyed blonde made in Germany. There are man Britishers with the roast beef of Merrie England in their cheeks, their hankies up their sleeves, their persons encased in shrill tweeds; there are also daughters of John Bull, narrow of shoulder, flat as to waist and largely shod; Colonials there are from the colonies, and Anglo-Indians from India—all side-stepping the strong arm of English law.

Observe also the sentimental seekers for soul mates; the professional alienators, as well as the amateur; the martyrs, the misunderstood, the "sweet things," the shopworn; those addicted to men, those addicted to women; sisters and brothers, wise and unwise and overly wise—the sorry procession files by.

And when among these devotees of gay Inconstancy there enters a partisan of grave Matrimony, strange to relate there is a plainly visible though enigmatic difference—can it be that stability is an entity? The very expression of the partisan is different—like her conjugal slate, her face is a clean blank which he who runs may read, but he seldom does, for the average masculine taste tends to a study of the facial chronicles of some Cynthia of the Minute.

Ought it to be a subject of surprise that the keen-eyed discern the traces of marriage? Bound hand and foot by the holy bonds, gagged by custom, tacked firmly down the middle and slip-stitched securely along the edges by conventionality—small wonder that there are a few scars!

Realities force themselves upon the Puppet; practical things are to be considered. Where to live? There are hotels—but for privacy as well camp on the curb. There are a few houses, held at prohibitive rentals. More feasible is the apartment with light housekeeping infacilities and the inveterate chafing dish.

The enterprising bandit of the town known as the shopkeeper is without charity or even credit for deserving

divorcoés; indeed, upon them the community is waxing fat hurriedly, as if to make time before the legislature snatches the very bread from its mouth.

The streets of Divorcedom reek of the ubiquitous delicatessen flaunting the inevitable leaden pie, cold boiled ham and potato salad; and standing in line are fugitives with near-pearl drops in their ears, guile in their hearts and unspoken but bitter regrets that the animate chequebooks, the martyr defrayers, are left behind forever.

To be reckoned with is the Saint Peter who holds the keys to the Paradise of Freedom. He unlocks the doors for supplicants (or boosts them over the transom) for a consideration which varies from a hundred to a thousand dollars according to the amount of legality required—also according to the depth of the supplicant's pocketbook.

As to the nature of the case? With dark, lurid pigments and a few deft touches, the Puppet paints her Bluebeard in the brunette coloring of the rotter. Saint Peter in his turn conjures up large lions in her pathway of which she has never dreamed; when he has sufficiently harrowed her with the dangers that hem her in, he courageously announces himself her saviour (for a consideration), and with a few mesmeric passes peculiar to magicians of the law, he miraculously eliminates the chimerical wild beasts. After relieving her of a fat fee, the gatekeeper bows the Puppet out in quite his best Western manner.

In due time the supplicant is launched socially, and comes upon fellow candidates. Their chief refuge conversationally is biography, in connection with which they conduct a slaughter house of husbands. How breath is left in them (the wives or the husbands), after what they are alleged to have been through, is a deep, dark mystery which only they could explain.

As the mutineers set to with a zest and match pasts, they prove to be nearly as knowing as so many ingénues. It appears that they are expecting decrees on grounds fraught with validity—extreme obesity, acute Methodism,

the vice of the toothpick, an ingrowing face, Judaism, an objection to traveling in double harness *three abreast*, an aversion to "in-laws," a strong weakness for offspring, and so on and so forth very much *ad nauseam*.

Having heard all of which, the Puppet wisely concludes that *marriage itself has become the perfectly good and legitimate excuse against love and happiness*.

There comes a revulsion for the cheap conclave, and like Kipling's cat that went about waving its wild tail and walking by its wild lone self, the lady withdraws from "The Colony" and its vacuous flippancies and takes the Pythagorean vow of avoidance of human cackle.

The Solitary One moralizes on the vagabond peregrinations of the Littlest God as he dashes off on the trail of false scents—propinquity, pique, platonic affection, love on the rebound, empty hearts (or heads), lonely souls, spent passion rekindling, beauties in distress with knights to the rescue, weepers in weeds, widowers with encumbrances—and straightway the impish idol instigates yearnings.

"Ah, Cupid," she chides, "why do you leap before you look?"

"Otherwise," promptly responds the elfin deity, "I should never dare to leap at all."

She smiles bleakly as she muses on love and its cheapening trafficking. How many hearts can encompass it? As well try to enclose Niagara in an afternoon teapot! As well may a butterfly look for sustenance in a snow-storm as a great passion seek an abiding place in the modern organ!

And as for divorce—is not relinquishing marriage akin to giving up existence itself? Though wedlock, like life, may have ceaselessly tormented its victim, who shall say that release in either case is welcomed with unmixed joy?

How easy it would be for a man to remain in love with his wife had he but married the other girl! Alas, so much ennui is resultant on the perverseness, the sheer cussedness, which impels humanity to answer quickly to the call of inaccessibility! 'Tis ever ho, for the

lure of what is withheld! And when up the roadway of infancy toddles the father of the man, how diligently he seeks the enticing mud puddle that he may step therein with both feet! This propensity never deserts him. As he sets out on the untraceable highway of manhood he is willingly overwhelmed by the fascinations of prohibited objects and the charm of doing all those things which he ought not to do. Locked doors, danger marks, chalk lines, forbidden fruits, neighbors' wives, fools' paradises and all spots where angels fear to tread are so many compelling attractions beckoning his ready feet into ineradicable mire. And because he has so often side-stepped the slipper heel of his doting parent, he flatters himself he can elude the firm barrel stave of implacable fate. What a touching faith has man in his own omnipotence!

In Divorce Land Father Time is a sluggard. He drags along wearily, interminably. Yet aspirants would fain retard him as he is about to usher in the *mauvais quart d'heure*—the Westernly brief courtroom scene. Its hideous details stamp themselves readily in the memory. But when it is successfully over—by the arrows of Eros, the Puppet is a divorcee! Unshackled! Unbridled! Free as the air!

Where are the anticipated thrills of exhilaration? Where the *gaieté de cœur*? The goddess of divorce is no Euphrosyne—she bears cypress rather than flowers to bestrew the paths of her votaries.

The newly emancipated one is *desolée*—she feels abashment deepening as thoughts fly to the East and the return thereto. Her sensations are those of long ago childish humiliation, when, having surreptitiously acquired jam, and been chastened by a quick Nemesis, the small transgressor emerges among virtuous playmates—well, the Puppet knows that the East will receive its grown delinquent as did the virtuous children the little one—with the same show of mock dismay and *precisely the same inner rage of envy at the successful daring of the culprit*.

More sadly apprehensive than the

journey westward is the journey eastward. And well it might be. First the lady has to contend with the attitude of the knowing who have *heard*; the correction of their misinformation is not less galling than the necessity of informing those who pretend they have *not heard*. Then there is the necessary or unnecessary but always quite unavoidable meeting with her late liege.

What a start he gives her! Her heart hammers suffocatingly; her blood congeals in her veins and then riots flame hot. And, sorry perversity (we appreciate nothing until we have been deprived of it), how often, when it is too late, there seems to be an allure in the glint of his eyes—a temptation to stroke his hair—once again to feel upon her groping hand the strength of his firm clasp. But she is a woman and must act a part.

And he? Doubtless he longs for the soft touch of her mouth upon his—for the caress of her slender hands. Poor humans, beneath their smiles they conceal the old ache for that which they may not have! Their own black ravens of Nevermore croak menacingly. They go their separate ways.

In the awful wreckage we make of life, it is slim unction we may take to our racked minds—the knowledge that it is not given to us to be entirely wrong any more than to be entirely right.

Divorce is the iconoclast of family. Due to its omnipresence, there are matrons a plenty but few mothers. How rare is the latter day Madonna and Child! Among the many who choose to remain childless, marriage is *probationary*. Under the now existent conditions, avoidance of children is surely the part of wisdom. Unbelievably seldom do the tiny peacemakers avail to reunite estranged elders! And then, then occur the real tragedies. One fears to ring up the curtain. There is Holy Ground.

The tender heart of a little child, anguished by isolation from an adored parent, suffers a pitiable torture—a sorrow poignant and utterly inconsolable. How sad is the shattering of young faith—how pitiful the smashing of youthful illusions! And very bitter in

the childish breast is the resentment to the interloper—the new Head of the House. The whole cosmos is chaos to the little mind. The little life has gone awry.

As to remarriage—what does it hold for divorcées? How in the nature of human nature can they hope for happiness? Suppose the woman be of the type that does not relinquish one husband until she has secured another—maybe, after having freed herself, the “other half of her soul” has availed himself of a privilege peculiar to his breed, and *changed his mind*. What then?

In cases where the anticipated marriage takes place, the inevitable comes to pass—in *his* mind must ever rankle her unfaith to her old vows. Though as long as he was the object (not the victim), her inconstancy was but a flattering lapse brought about by a consuming passion for himself which very naturally swept all before it. Moreover, as always in amatory chronicles, while he was a lover he was a slave—now that he possesses he is a despot. Furthermore, now that he owns he no longer covets. Besides, man-like, he is a monopolist—he begins to realize that he prefers a woman for his only own, she who never was another's. And here, not without his cue, enters the green-eyed monster, gigantic and terrible as befits an attendant upon second lieges whose predecessors are live men. There appears also an insistent devil who ceaselessly drones of the past, chanting the bromidic “History repeats itself.”

While she—what confidence can she have in him? He went poaching on another's preserves; he lacks the true sportsman's instinct. Ah, the cold pale dawn of Hymen's “morning after,” when Consequences, the fools' teacher, has arrived as always *too late*!

And what of the divorcées who have no groom in reserve? Some cannot exist alone, yet they will not await a permanent and pure passion; in their impatient search for the fruit of the tree of true love they pluck the apples of Sodom. Then there are those who

started out on their high flight without the necessary preliminary of having grown their wing feathers—they remarry for support. Those there are who have become tarnished—they take unto themselves a husband for reinstatement. And many grow weary of the gently insinuating and insinuatingly gentle manner with which masculinity has pursued them since they have tasted the dust and ashes of the freedom of femininity.

Here let it be known that the marriage license is an exceedingly efficient "hands off"—sheer impossibility has ever been a large factor in the honor of mankind—uncertainty has ever been a successful decoy. So, since conventional habit of thought is difficult to eradicate, the flotsam and jetsam of wrecked wedlock must look to be blown hither and thither by every wind of desire. (For is not experimentation legitimate? It is very much in vogue in quite the best circles.) The huntsman seeks not his quarry in the barnyard. The desirer pleads not with the débutante. There are the peaches from which the bloom has vanished—they may be *handled*.

Alas! Innocence, faith, honor, love and all life's precious treasures are Humpty Dumpty—once they have a great fall, all the King's horses and all the King's men cannot put them together again.

Though masculine man may venture many stakes, the feminine fate is determined by a single throw. Inasmuch as the nightingale sings many seasons and the rose blooms but one, youth comes only once—to a woman.

Now all ye men and matrons snug in the coziness of connubial content, sneer not at the detached one. Truly as with the trespasser, her way is hard and stony and overgrown with prickly cactus. So forbear to scoff—especially since you, even you, may chance to wake up some morning to find yourself detached. For in this quick era of *presto* change one never *can* tell—and for ways that are dark and deeds that are evil, running mates far and away outdistance the notorious Heathen Chinee.

Yea, verily, this is the day of rapid

transit along amatory lines! The age is rampant for love, love, love. There is never a waif in a bread line as eager-eyed for the whole wheat as are the passion-hungry for sentimental sop.

Love—what is committed in thy name! Sin masquerades in thy habiliments; Lust is thy twin; Coquetry is thy nearest of kindred. Thou art the serpent at the breasts of women. Why permittest thou an hundred counterfeits of thyself to pass current among e'en thy disciples?

Ah, amorous traffickings, iniquities peculiar to two—men's trivialities and women's tragedies!

Humans go through life like blooded hounds, keen on the scent for the Ideal; and God only knows when they find it—they never do. It is ever the Man Next Door, or the bit of chimerical imagery presiding over the Other Fellow's coffee pot.

The wooing time is a fleeting silvery twilight, or a rose-shaded candle ray; while the wedded time—in it we bask in a twenty-mule-team calcium glare beside which the famous fierce white light that beats upon thrones is but a feeble scintilla.

Lend ear, oh, promulgators of platitudes anent divorce—for your reforms strike at the root of the social evil. Do battle against the trite traditions, the lugubrious legends, the sacerdotal shibboleths that cling to the venerable institution of matrimony. There are civil service examinations for the protection of public works—why not a scheme of protection for the great unborn?

Have you taken notice of the holy state? How the fools rush in! Observe the *omnium-gatherum*—the sheep cheek by jowl with the goats! Hand in hand with the tired philanderer enters the curious ingénue; beside innocence stalks infamy; with youth totters age; grave keeps step with gay, lively with severe, intellectuality with illiteracy; the amateur and the artist, the novice and the knower, the roué and the débutante

Hop and skip to Fancy's fiddle,
Hands across and down the middle;
Marriage is the only riddle
That we shrink from giving up.

Could we but begin at the end, matrimony would soon be a lost art! And why, by the bow of Cupid, all this pother about it? As well take no thought as to whom you marry—marry whom you please and you shall find you have somebody else.

Of a truth, 'tis a great game—a game with hearts for dice and many a throw nowadays instead of one as originally intended. Man and the times have changed—not so the holy bonds. Now mankind wearies of an eternal Garden of Eden; he prefers peeps into Paradises—with various Eves.

Can it be that the divine passion is

on the blink? It is surely enfeebled. Its riders are speeding it—they are too skilled—too expert—there are no amateurs; and pity 'tis, for the less one knows how the better one loves!

Alack and alas that there are so many doors to which we find no key—so many veils through which we cannot see! Therefore we shall cease to engage in combat with our windmills. For all of us, Destiny, the perverse stepmother, shall continue to feed her fat children—Fortune, the jade, shall offer nuts to mankind after he has lost his teeth—and we shall all know how to live after we have outlived life.



TWO OF A KIND

By Eunice Ward

WHEN Chloe saw her valentines,
She cried, "Ah, woe betide us!
In all this host of messages
There's not a line from Midas!"

But Chloe might have had a gift
If Midas could have made it;
He thought of sending her his heart,
But found he had mislaid it.

He searched his breast, he tapped his brain,
Reviewed each list and docket,
Until, from force of habit, he
Bethought him of his pocket.

And there he found not one, but two!
The Midas way—and so he's
Quite positive that money talks—
The extra heart was Chloe's.



MRS. HUFF—The skirts of those dancers are very short.
MR. HUFF—Yes, that's their long suit.

THE ISLE OF TRUTH

By John Kendrick Bangs

I DREAMED last night I'd landed on a most peculiar isle,
Where fraud was never practised, and where all were free of guile.
When people spoke they did not hide the thing they truly thought,
But blurted out the facts exact, for cunning caring naught.
For instance, if some parent proud brought forth a baby new
To show a neighbor how the child could gurgle, grin and coo,
The chap to whom 'twas thus displayed would say without a fuss,
"I do not think I ever saw a homelier little cuss."

And at their social functions it was terrible to hear
The people going round the room and talking loud and clear—
"You're looking very plain tonight." "Your gown's an awful fit."
"How is that jackass son of yours who poses as a wit?"
"What brings you here, Kersmithers? It is very strange to me
How empty-headed chumps like you get in society."
"Good night, dear Mrs. Squiggleton; I've had a beastly time.
Your guests were mostly lemons, and the supper was a crime."

Upon the stump the candidates, no matter what their rank,
Here in this lovely Isle of Truth, were not a bit less frank.
I heard one making an address before a howling mob,
And this is what the fellow said—oh, he was on the job!—
"Well, fellow toughs and noble crooks, I've come to ask your votes,
Although I know you've no more sense than just so many goats.
I ask your votes for office, and appeal to every brute,
Not that I wish to serve you but because I need the loot."

And oh, the "ads" their papers had! I never really dreamed
Folks anywhere could speak such truths as in those columns gleamed—
"Nobody Wants the Things We Sell, and So We Sell 'em Cheap."
"Our Motor Cars Are Bum for Speed, but You Should See Them Creep."
"Our Sudless Soap Cleans Nothing Well, and when You Scrub the Floor
With Our New 'Nit-Clean' it Will Leave it Dirtier than Before."
"Try Binks's Glue, the Thinnest Glue that Ever You Did See—
Sticks Nothing but the Purchaser, and Right Well 'Stuck' is He!"

I must confess I found much joy in that old Isle of Truth,
Although its manners seemed to be a trifle too uncouth.
I would have stayed forever, but alas, it could not be,
For, at a noble banquet someone gave to honor me,
A lady fair, to whom I'd talked as well as e'er I might,
Gave me a jar that waked me in the middle of the night.
Said she, with such a pleasant smile, when bidding me adieu,
"I'd always heard you were a fool, and now I know it's true."

LADY TUFTON—"THE TERRIBLE"

By Cecil Chard

IT struck Calthrop Drake as little short of miraculous that, at the first dinner to which he was invited after his return to London, he should at once encounter the woman who had been so much in his thoughts. The dinner hour was eight, but it was already somewhat later when Mrs. Westcott declared, with amiable despair, that one of her guests had not yet arrived; and conversation and hunger were at daggers drawn before at last Lady Tufton was announced and came gliding in as calmly as a sailboat into harbor.

When the unexpected sound of her name startled Drake into instantaneous attention, he leaned forward eagerly to see her, his unfinished sentence suspended in midair. How vividly he recalled the last occasion when he had heard it—moaned, over and over again, by the parched lips of young Winterborn, dying in Amritsar, in the heat and loneliness of the Indian night! As she entered he realized at once, with a pang of dismay, that his expectations had been strained to the point of absurdity, and that Lady Tufton did not resemble in any feature the splendid culprit of his imagination. He had prepared himself for startling and picturesque beauty, for a manner of stately disdain, for a brave wit—a blaze and flare of mockery!

He saw a tall woman with red hair sail across the long polished smoothness of the floor with soft awkwardness, submerging in the yards of material dragging behind her several light footstools, fur rugs and other small craft that lay overturned in her wake. To Calthrop Drake, ignorant barbarian, she appeared to be clothed in a dull and ancient garment that resembled nothing so much

as an antique cotton curtain from an Indian bazaar. Some lace, of equal antiquity, but of real though rather tarnished beauty, fell away from ample shoulders that were crossed and recrossed by ropes of shining, jangling beads. On her arm she carried, as naturally as she might have held a bunch of flowers, a little coal black spaniel.

So far he had proceeded in his rather cynical observations when the move to the dining room was made. He mechanically appropriated the combination of pink cheeks and white muslin assigned to him and gave to his companion the small coin of the most perfunctory attention. Opposite to him, above the vernal freshness of a bowl of daffodils, Lady Tufton's head appeared to float with a curious effect of detachment. Her hair, he reluctantly admitted, was a crown of glory for any woman; it was all aglow, and in its negligent splendor of shine and dark and twist and coil and flying tendrils, it burned, against the background of a dim blue curtain, like a small conflagration. Between his remarks on the usual weather for the time of year, and his companion's contributions to the same subject, he had taken in—with the turbot and the pigeon in aspic—every movement of two small, heavily jeweled hands, every modulation of tones that had the rough candor and the husky sweetness of a boy's voice before it has hardened into manliness.

With ever increasing surprise he observed the amused appreciation with which Lady Tufton's least opinions were received. The nervous energy of her utterance was as remarkable as her lack of enthusiasm. Every assertion challenged contradiction while she superciliously

demolished opposition by statements so sharp, so defiant and so illogical that they were as unanswerable as blows. Her criticisms he dismissed as impassioned nonsense, at once reckless, exclamatory and insincere. And yet—insincere? He caught her eyes with the question still in his and could not control a slight start. Alas for preconceptions! It was his first full view of her face, and the fact that she was positively plain seemed to Drake, for some reason, to preclude insincerity.

What, then, he brooded, had the poor young fool meant by ceaselessly dwelling upon her beauty, by raving about her eyes? They were curious eyes, small, heavy-lidded, uplifted at the corners, with short lashes so black and thick that they seemed impenetrably to shade the sleepy sparkle between them. Her brows were spanned by two fine black arches almost submerged by the red wave of her hair that swept boldly across her forehead. Her nose he condemned as thick and upturned—the nose of a pert barmaid—and her mouth, he decided grimly, was never still long enough for him to observe it. Her face was a problem the solution of which was suddenly delayed by a frown of the haughtiness.

Lady Tufton tapped upon the table with her fan, and when his guilty attention was fixed,

"My good sir," she called to him, "my eyebrows are real, my jewels are not; I bought all of 'em for eighteen shillin's!"

He looked helplessly at the beads with which she was playing, and then apprehensively around the table; but she had chosen her moment, and before he could stammer a reply to her impertinence she had carelessly turned away and resumed her conversation.

Drake had been away from England too long not to feel himself awkward and ill at ease in surroundings in which, nevertheless, he was quick to recognize the familiar charm. He was beset by trivial anxieties, and his temper, for the moment, was that of a sensitive and resentful schoolboy. His face burned under his tan as he thought of retorts he might have made to the correction that had struck him dumb. So this was a

sample of the vaunted candor of Lady Tufton—"the Terrible"! She had dared to reprove him—this mature *enfant terrible*—this intellectual Amazon whose secret he held in the hollow of his hand! The knowledge of her hidden experience—perhaps one of many—had been forced upon him; was there some subtle subconsciousness at work establishing a relation between them? In spite of his anger Drake was uneasily aware that he had actually to brace himself to meet boldly the direct glance that now and again Lady Tufton abruptly turned to give him.

The talk floated around him, now loud, now low, nonchalant, gay, good-humored; he accepted its lightness with contempt and yet acknowledged with bitterness how incapable he would ever be of adopting its easy and intimate tone. It was a relief to him when at last at some silent signal the women rose like a flock of birds and, with a great rustling and twittering, withdrew.

At no time had Drake been a "squire of dames." He had fought, from his early manhood, too grim a battle; even partial success had come to him late, too late, he believed, for the full savor of it. He had not been attracted by many women—they possessed for him the charm and the mystery of the unknown—and he suspected the best of them of some subtle wiliness, a secret capacity for deceit. During the lonely years on his remote tea plantation his heart had been stirred but rarely, his imagination never. Then he had read, with the avidity of an exile soon to return to his native land, in a bundle of home papers an article on remarkable women in modern society. The description of Lady Tufton was unusually graphic, the writer dwelling with enthusiasm on the strange beauty of his subject—her unconventionality, her indifference to gossip, her courage, her almost masculine scorn of subterfuge. A photograph illustrating the article had shown a blurred and shadowy profile, one flash of light on masses of hair that swam into soft darkness. Drake had torn it out, and for a time the picture had possessed him; but in the confusion of packing he had ceased to possess it and

the impression had faded. It had been recalled to him weirdly enough in the days before young Winterborn's death. While the atmosphere grew dim with smoke and the voices around him went humming on about people and events new to him, Drake's memories went back to the immediate past, and his cigar was as sand to his taste. The first time his unfortunate friend had mentioned Lady Tufton, Drake had not credited his own senses. He had recalled the name instantly, and the photograph with its blurred, appealing profile. In his misery Winterborn had moaned out his wrongs with the painful reiteration of delirium; one moment aglow with adoration, the next filling the hot and airless room with imprecations; fighting for breath only to denounce anew the baseness of treachery that had so cruelly betrayed him.

When the struggle was over and Amritsar had been left behind him, Lady Tufton's imagined personality had continued to haunt Drake with irritating persistence. He had felt an insatiable curiosity to see this woman, whose shadowy presence had upheld the passionate boy in the very grip of death itself.

Now his disillusionment was complete. The trivial personal slight had rekindled his former resentment. As he sat gnawing his cigar his thoughts were savage and unashamed. Ah, what would he not give for the opportunity to punish her—unabashed coquette that she was—to humiliate her—to make her suffer! He shook himself free, with difficulty, from his crude reflections and followed his host to the drawing room.

Pausing at a window, he had the leisure to take in, with deep satisfaction, the long, light, charming place; against the polished surface of the floors and the wooden panels of the wainscot, the furniture, the flowers and the women—bouquets themselves of shimmering color—were combined in groups of admirable brilliance and grace. Almost immediately he became aware that Lady Tufton had perceived his isolation, and it was with a sensation of subdued excitement that he saw her rise with the

evident intention of joining him. He could not suppress a faint sense of amusement as he watched her cross the room with her soft glide, as careless again of the fate of her train as a tigress might have been of her tail. The eyes of the spaniel gleamed like jewels among her laces, and one silky black ear lay across the warm whiteness of her neck.

At her approach he unconsciously drew himself up in an attitude of defense.

"Have I met you before?" she demanded blandly, with a slight smile of interrogation.

"Not to my knowledge, madame," he replied abruptly; "my name is Drake."

"Why haven't I?" she mused, still looking at him with eyes that suggested laughter.

"Fate has probably been unkind!" he parried, still on guard.

"To me?" she instantly took him up; then, without waiting for his protest, she continued her inquisition: "If I have not met you before, Mr. Drake, may I ask why I was the object of your microscopic attentions at dinner? Is optical vivisection part of your ordinary social stock in trade? You deserve a diploma!"

Drake smiled, in spite of himself, at the humorous dryness of her voice.

"Pardon my rudeness; I had heard much about you."

She shrugged her shoulders and spread her fan with a little rattle. She was frankly puzzled at the reluctant tone that barely disguised his hostility.

"What it is to be a public character!" she sighed. "I can fancy the sweet things said of me. I am all tenderness, patience, humility—a potpourri of the womanly virtues. Who has been scattering the rose leaves?"

Here, if you please, was the longed-for occasion for vengeance; here she presented herself innocently for the knife; but her plaintive mildness was disconcerting, and he found it impossible to strike without a warning.

"I have lived in India many years," he evaded. "My last three months were spent in Lahore."

The significance of his intention was lost upon her; her expression changed.

"Come," she urged impatiently, "that

is not all; what are you holding in reserve?"

"I took care of young Winterborn," he replied bluntly, "the week before he died."

Lady Tufton's face was in shadow, but Drake knew instantly by the sudden contraction of all her features how unintentionally savage had been his blow.

She stood very erect and quite motionless, but her executioner turned red as he stammered:

"I—I beg your pardon; I thought you must have heard!"

"No," she answered, drawing a quick breath; "that news has been kept for you mercifully to break to me."

He was silent with embarrassment not free from contrition. She looked around her vaguely, keeping up a little restless movement with her fan; then, with a comprehensive gesture that swept the whole room from existence, she turned to the balcony and, in passing out, beckoned to him to follow her. For an instant he was tempted pitilessly to ignore her careless command, but curiosity conquered resentment and he followed readily enough down the narrow staircase into the garden.

What an air of Old World peace filled the secluded enclosure! What a brooding stillness that the distant roar of London only made more profound! Moonlight and shadow everywhere, even in the open arbor that sheltered them from the faint breeze that swept the silvered lawn.

Lady Tufton barely waited for Drake to seat himself before she attacked him:

"So it was from Winterborn you had heard about me?"

He bowed, resenting her tone too much to offer a word of explanation.

"He told you all—the whole story?" she breathlessly demanded.

"He was a gentleman, madame," he replied angrily, "and—"

Lady Tufton interrupted him with a laugh in which she managed to convey the utmost scornful incredulity.

"Hear him!" she mocked, addressing the garden. "I suppose he does not mean to be insulting!"

"If there is anything you wish me to

tell you, I must beg of you to hear me out," and Drake rose and stood ready stiffly to desert her. Lady Tufton promptly assumed the defensive.

"You do not begin your story very considerably."

"You misunderstand me willfully!" he retorted; then, as she again protested, he added desperately: "Winterborn spoke continually of you in the delirium of his last illness; but as he never recovered consciousness, I could not know how much was mere raving."

Lady Tufton ignored his pacific assertion, but asked in a more cordial tone than she had yet used whether he would give her the whole history, without reserve. She could appreciate his magnanimous intentions, but they were quite misplaced.

Drake at once resumed his seat.

"I met Winterborn a few months before my return to England," he began, without preamble. "I dined with him twice at the house of his chief at Lahore. We spent hours wandering through the streets and in and out of the bazaars. He looked ill and sad, and I thought him suffering from homesickness—to which new arrivals in India are specially subject. I found him modest and well informed, a sufficiently surprising contradiction; and I drew from him that his work was distasteful to him and his surroundings even more so. He shared a bungalow with three other men in Amritsar, and before he left Lahore, where he had come on business, I had promised to pay him a visit. I was anxious to see the Golden Temple, and in the absence of his housemates he could offer me a hospitality for which he apologized—saying he could give me no bait in the way of social distractions, as he had remained, after eight months or a year, as much of a stranger as upon his arrival—he had a few acquaintances and no friends. When I met him by accident again on the following Sunday at Lahore, my first impression was strengthened that here was an uncommon nature, with talents that should have provided him with a different vocation than that of a mere clerkship. He seemed spiritless and depressed; I put it down

to the heat and to the combination of fells to which a first season in India subjects even a strong and wholesome English lad. The day before I was to join him in Amritsar, I received a wire telling me he could not receive me; he had come down with enteric of a mild form. It occurred to me that I might at least assure myself that he was sufficiently well cared for, and, immediately after my arrival, I went to see him. I found him in high fever, with a native attending to his wants. Naturally I stayed and did what I could for him; it was unfortunately very little, for, after the first few hours of recognition, he drifted into delirium. Six days later, toward evening—he died."

Drake paused, hesitating.

"Go on," she commanded firmly, and he did not pretend to misunderstand.

"He began to speak of you the instant he was no longer master of himself. He held interminable conversations with you, in which he alternately pleaded and threatened. Sometimes he seemed to be carried away by a most passionate admiration, sometimes by an equally vehement anger and contempt. He accused you of—of—misleading him, of making sport of him—of betraying—in short, of drawing him on and then cruelly thrusting him out—getting rid of him—"

Drake passed his handkerchief across his perspiring brow; in spite of his determination he found his task increasingly difficult. At last he recklessly gave it up, adding only:

"The end came most peacefully; he appeared to be under the impression that you were bending over him—supporting him."

Lady Tufton made no movement, said no word; but a look of uncontrollable emotion passed like a ray of moonlight across her face, shone in the liquid sparkle of her eyes and was gone. The next moment she raised her head and asked mildly:

"He felt himself wronged, poor boy?"

"Wronged!" he exclaimed. "He died of it, 'poor boy'!"

She started at the indignant mockery in his repetition of her phrase. Her at-

titude had been one of uncomplaining regret, a resignation that Drake considered, under the circumstances, wholly unjustified. Though she was evidently a creature of surprises, he was unprepared for the vehemence with which she took him up; he had "sown the wind"—now he was about to "reap the whirlwind."

The little dog whined, and she flung him out into the grass of the lawn.

"So you have instituted yourself a court of inquiry," she demanded sharply, "and judge and jury all in one? Before putting on the black cap, would you care to hear my version of the tale that has made you so ardent a partisan? Winterborn evidently chose you involuntarily for his confessor; I *insist* upon you being mine."

Drake bowed, all his unamiable qualities again brought to the surface by the proud hardness of her voice.

"Are you much in love with life?" she asked bluntly.

"No, madame," he gave her in return.

"And yet you are the master of it, have fashioned it to your taste. What you have failed to do has been the result of ill fortune, as dishonest men call their weakness of will. No, you need not protest; I know your arguments to satiety; hear mine! I'm rude—very well, we will be as rude as savages if you like, but do not let us beat about in the dark. Hear me first; then I'll listen to you and not beg for quarter—and understand, please, that if I give you that much of my confidence it is in gratitude for your kindness—to him."

Here he tried to put in a word to stem the torrent, but she silenced him with an imperative:

"Hush! God knows, generous impulses are not so common that we need to deprecate and deny—even our own. It doesn't concern you to know what my life had been before I met Winterborn. I owe you no account of it, nor apology nor excuse. It contained no less disappointment, I suppose, and chagrin and anxiety than is the ordinary lot of mortals. Nevertheless, at that time I was all smothered rebellion and defiance

PERSONS MENTIONED IN "THE TERRIBLE"
Drake, Winterborn, Lady Tufton, the dog, the law

and bitterness. I was fierce as any caged animal in the zoo, anxious to revenge on everyone the injustice from which I suffered, or fancied I suffered, which amounts to the same thing. The excitement of living in the fastest, most thoughtless, most brilliant circle in the world did not blind me to the fact that day by day I sacrificed all that remained to me of honest convictions, of belief in goodness, of hope for the future. I hated every detail of the life, the rudeness, the vulgarity, the downright crime of it, less than the silliness, the revolting coarseness and stupidity. Ah!"

She rose impulsively, and rushing up to him in imitation of a fashionable woman, burst into a stream of meaningless exclamations.

Drake stared at her in such amazement that she threw herself back into her seat with a laugh that seemed to relieve her. She resumed more quietly:

"Indeed, I'm quite sane; I was only about to give you a taste of what conversational food I lived on—or starved on. You'll ask why I didn't escape—but escape where? To do what? To live how? What is a woman to do who has only one poor little social talent, who loves to talk and who isn't made for district nursing or browbeating the poor? A woman's taste for social success is like a craving for drink—she wants it and she loathes it in the same breath. Don't interrupt! I granted you weakness in men who fail to assert their individual power—of course I was weak, and my weakness took a dozen rash and foolish forms. Half in mischief, half in disgust at the false atmosphere in which I existed, I determined at least to do wrong bravely and to tell the truth. To be quite honest, I got a certain enjoyment out of shocking people, and came near to social ostracism in consequence. The way was long before I learned to assert myself fearlessly, without malice, through sincere conviction as I do now." Her voice deepened. "That I owe to Winterborn—he made me free—he taught me."

She broke off and looked vaguely out into the night. Drake had lost any desire to make himself heard. He felt

that for the moment she had forgotten him; she was trying to justify herself to herself, not trying to palliate or condone her offenses. He could just distinguish her features against the thick darkness of the leaves behind her, and her whole countenance was so startlingly alive, its pallor so emphasized by her vivid and animated glance, that he marveled that he had thought her plain. In the interval he drank in the silence gratefully—like a runner with a moment to breathe—before he again tried to keep up with her soft, swift speech.

"I don't know why I linger so over the preface," she continued, smiling faintly, "making a tragedy of the very little matter of a woman out of place, fitting in nowhere. Well, then, I met Winterborn in Devon, one summer when I was supposed to be in Homburg. I had taken a cottage in the very heart of the country in order to try the experiment of solitude and rural peace and my own society. When I met him I had already had an overdose of all three, and was indescribably bored. One morning I was trying a rather mettlesome horse in a dogcart; the groom had jumped down to see to something gone wrong with the harness, and before he could turn we were off at a pace that would have taken me to London or to—"

She gave a little significant wave of her hand.

"At a turn in the road I caught a flying glimpse of a man ahead of us on a wheel, and an instant later he was hanging on at my horse's head and we had come to a standstill.

"You can imagine that, to my mind, Winterborn had rescued me from worse than a mere smash—for he had put an immediate end to the voluntary solitude to which I had condemned myself. I found him ardent, brave and honest as a girl."

She paused.

"I find it difficult to describe him without dissecting him, but his charm depended upon something over and above his qualities or his defects. It was part of his youth, his boundless enthusiasm and his deep rooted sincerity. Though he had read much, he took no

opinions at second hand; his poetic conviction of the wonder and beauty of the world we lived in was entirely free from pretense—his mind simply could not grasp evil. Though his idols had feet of clay, he kept them uplifted by the purity of his worship. I know, for—I was one of the idols and, for a time, unconsciously perhaps, lived up to his level.

"We were excellent comrades, rode, tramped, read, fished and laughed through three of the freshest, cleanest, most enjoyable months I have known since my childhood. I have not known many. They came to an end, however, suddenly enough. Some big concern in London failed and Winterborn's father was heavily involved. He himself was offered a clerkship in the city by a sympathetic friend, and accepted it without hesitation. He came to say good-bye to me, and said it for three hours. I let him go reluctantly, realizing better than he did that he was unfit for such a struggle. When I returned to town some weeks later, I found he was making small headway against the monotony and sordid detail of his life. To return some of the kindness he had offered me, I made him as free of my house as he had made me free of his own woods and fields; showed him the world—he was always thinking of it with a capital letter—introduced him to London writ large—to beauty, politics, art, science—all the bewildering surface brilliance of it. And I had my pleasure watching him, seeing how bravely he held his head, how gaily he took the buffets fate dealt him; the slights, even the covert insults, he shook off as lightly as water dashed in his face. Life was so well worth living, every minute of it! Then—then some despicable fool warned him that he was compromising—compromising my name!"

She shook with bitter merriment.

"He came to me straight, fierce as a young Indian, all fire and flame and indignant rage, but—but—the murder was out; the poor lad—loved me!

"Perhaps you may believe me," she resumed in a lower tone, "when I tell you that I was unprepared for it. It was a blow to me, and it broke, in one in-

stant, all the pretty fabric of as innocent an idyl as you could care to experience. For some time I tried to believe that it was all a foolish fancy, that it would blow over. Then he lost his place, and confessed he could not do his duty for thinking of me and for planning how he could help me, be near to me, keep me from suffering. Oh, it was a pleasant awakening! He was unkempt, half starved—but he brought me roses every day. Roses! God knows whether he did not steal them!

"I used every influence in my power, and finally he was offered a position in China, but—the lunatic flatly refused it. He would not leave me, would not leave England—such a voice, such a gesture! An admiral on a sinking ship—the youthful pride of it! Then—so do little things sway us—I saw 'Nance Oldfield'—you know the play? To cure him of his passion the lovely actress deceives her young lover into the belief that she is base. It is all high comedy, if you remember. Ah, it was high comedy for me, for—I desperately played the part to him. I made him believe me first petulant, then irritable, then bored, then false—there was no middle path possible. If I had had independent means—oh, but what is the use? I tried everything first; finally I spoiled his memory, defiled those lovely weeks of most innocent comradeship, and he raged—loved me, hated me, loved me, cursed me—and left me!"

The last words were spoken in a voice the ringing sweetness of which moved Drake to a painful degree. When she had finished, her hands dropped into her lap and she sat rigid, staring out into the lovely night, that made around her a soft sound, a rustle and a murmur as of wind in the treetops.

"Now," she said sadly, recovering herself with an effort, "it is your turn. You may hit as hard as you like."

Drake showed no immediate anxiety to avail himself of the privilege. His astonishment left little room for severity; he had expected a tale of ordinary intrigue, vulgarly conceived, brutally carried out, brazenly denied; what had he listened to? He did not try to find a

name for it, but his voice insinuated deference as he replied:

"You will be very good if you will not send me away with my dull head confused. Pity my inexperience in the ways of women and let me ask humbly a few questions."

"Still questions?"

"I am not hitting back, but—if these were insuperable objections—his youth, his poverty, your own inability to give him substantial help—why not have left him a hope for the future? Would he not gladly have gone to China, or to Timbuctoo, with such a prospect to work for?"

"Such a prospect!" she echoed. "But—a prospect of what?"

"Of what!" he contested. "Why, eventually, of—well, of marriage—vaguely—at some indefinite future. Difference of age is, after all, a conventional barrier, and—if you did not desire it—at least it would have given you time and distance and change of scene to count upon."

Lady Tufton listened with an air of exaggerated respect that for the moment deceived him.

"My dear man," she gave him for sole reply, "would change of scene annihilate Sir Henry—or would time and distance be more efficacious assassins?"

"Sir Henry!" It was Drake's turn to echo blankly.

"You must really meet my husband," she continued, a little maliciously. "He's in Paris, I believe, or in America—he's always somewhere!"

Drake was appalled at his own simplicity. Winterborn had never mentioned a husband; he had evidently ignored him, grimly buried him alive.

"Still," he insisted bluntly, with suppressed annoyance, "to my mind there were ways enough. Was this a specimen of the candor you aimed at? Your personal indifference makes it, to my plain way of thinking, no less a refinement of cruelty. Why not have dealt honestly with him, fairly, like a man—sharply broken off? Why, if necessary—"

"Why—why—why?" she mocked rudely. "Because—because—because!

And is that not reason enough? Have you been listening to me? And you still ask me why—why? Because of folly, because of caprice, because of a hundred reasons—women's all!"

With a sigh of sheer disgust she stooped and swept up the little dog that had crept back into the folds of her gown; then, rising, she gave him as she turned away a look that assailed him—willful dullard and bore!

He was so bewildered at her sudden action, at the change of tone—the flip-pant, scornful challenge of it—that he watched her, without moving, as she made her way to the house. He was about to rise hastily and follow her when she halted, and turning, came back slowly, reluctantly. She did not reënter the arbor but remained outside, moving restlessly toward him, then away again, indifferent, proud, nervous. He did not help her with a word; he was again utterly at sea. She brought him back to land with a start.

"One is never too old to be a fool!" she volunteered, explaining hastily with a laugh: "I am speaking of myself just now. It is so much easier to confess that we have been criminal than that we have been ridiculous." Her tone wavered between seriousness and jest. "Evidently you do not spring at conclusions but walk soberly up to them by the straight path. And your conclusions are so eminently well behaved that they take for granted that my sentiments were those of an equally well conducted middle age. Is one ever middle-aged? I was so old at twenty! But in *that* summer I was a girl—fresh, unspoiled, unawakened and—thirty-two. Have you ever noticed that when summer comes late, it comes with something of surprise, with more of rush and glory? And perhaps I knew that if I hesitated—let myself drift—he would pay bitterly for it with the ruin of his life. And now he has paid for it, you tell me, with his life—but swiftly, not sordidly! Ah, it is all such a muddle! I cannot catch—nor probably can you," she said, turning now sadly, finally to leave him—"the faintest echo of a moral to this history!"

RUGS AND REAL ESTATE

By Campbell MacCulloch

"**I**'S 'Daghestan' a cigarette brand or an upholstered gent with a fierce look an' a big bent cheese knife?" inquired Mr. Jeremiah Simpson with a puzzled frown.

"I never do seem to get them foreign words planted just right," he went on a little impatiently. "Why foreigners uses names as outlandish as that gets me. Now you take good old American words like 'Skaneateles,' or 'Oshkosh,' or 'Conshohocken,' or even 'Kenoshacones,' and there's some sense to 'em. Why, 'most anyone could tell that 'Skaneateles' was a kind of a long, thin, damp town with an ingrowin' disposition an' a village council that regards neckties as a sinful waste, while 'Oshkosh' just naturally describes a place that's crazy about roughneck baseball an' hand-painted gold bricks." Mr. Simpson sighed heavily and dropped his newspaper into his lap.

"It's a Russian province on the Caspian Sea, I think," replied Mr. James Forsythe Kingsley wearily from the depths of the morris chair. "You can smell it farther than you can see it."

He relapsed into the vision that Mr. Simpson had awakened him from; the vision of himself at the age of nineteen applying a coat of brilliant carmine to a statue of John Harvard, and of the panorama of events that succeeded his painful interview with the college authorities. His gaze rested lazily upon the flashing river that stretched out beyond Riverside Drive, and he smiled a little regretfully. Mr. Simpson pushed his glasses up on his pink forehead and snorted.

"How would a white man guess that, now?" he grumbled, and rattled the

paper impatiently. "These here cosy corners of the Orient"—he pronounced it "Orey-yent" with the accent on the last syllable—"is enough to set a crystal gazer wingin'."

Mr. Simpson and his companion were loafing in the living room of their apartment on New York's most favored residential thoroughfare, the avenue where the strident yawps of the locomotive whistle vie raucously with the derisive hoot of the tugboat; where the salt-laden ozone carries on a terrific battle with the aroma of the cattle cars, and the rattle and bang of shifting freight trains permit the favored resident to get at least two hours sleep every night. It was some years now since they had formed their partnership for the education of the public in the devious ways of deceit, and the plan of operation had proved most successful, based as it was upon a series of object lessons that invariably cost the pupil large quantities of his hardly stolen wealth. The police feigned an interest in their work, of course, but it was an interest tempered with the wind of humorous approval at the spectacle of a rich man being stripped of ready money. Not even a precinct detective can take such a sight seriously.

Kingsley was a young man of gentle appearance and New England parents, the latter a tribute to his ornithological perspicacity, and he was of marvelous value because of his manners and the ability to wear good clothes as if they belonged to him. He had fallen under the protective wing of Mr. Simpson at a time when Kingsley had offended the police department, and Simpson had realized that his ideas lay beyond his own executive capacities. This psycho-

logical juxtaposition of orbits had proved remarkably profitable to both. Now they rested from the intense labor undergone in separating a multi-millionaire from a large cheque; Mr. Kingsley dreamed luxuriously, and Mr. Simpson planned elaborately.

"Thinking of taking a little trip to the land of the festive Dag?" asked Mr. Kingsley, elevating one graceful foot to the window ledge, and lighting a monogrammed cigarette. "Hardly worth while, I should say. It's like the last piece in the European puzzle block, and— Now that's a shame!" he exploded abruptly, sitting up straight in the chair and peering forth into the roadway. The aged Mr. Simpson rose with an agility surprising in one of his years, and looked out in time to see a large, beetle-browed policeman, whose front hair obscured his eyesight, seize a small Armenian by the back of the neck and spin him into the middle of the roadway. In his progress the small man decorated the adjacent scenery with three or four clamantly outrageous rugs, and spilled language as carelessly as an opera singer sheds complaints. The policeman's action indicated appropriate lines to accompany the business.

"Hey there!" bawled Mr. Simpson suddenly, waving his newspaper hysterically out of the window.

The small peddler had ceased his gyrations in the exact center of the roadway, and in the very act of beginning his oration stepped in front of a heavy blue touring car that swung around the corner. The horn squawked affrightedly, the policeman, chauffeur, potential victim and Mr. Simpson yelled horribly, the brakes screamed, the machine skidded and came to a shuddering, soul-jarring stop exactly eleven and three-quarter inches from the Armenian's person, whereupon a large man with a purple countenance and fat hands rose in the car and spoke diversely. The cause of the disturbance fled hurriedly around into the adjacent side street, and Mr. Simpson laughed shortly.

"Take a peek at that Archibald-the-whole-works with the fat jowls!" he chuckled. "Look at him roast the

cop; see him terrify the nurse girls! Why—"

Young Mr. Kingsley turned about to see what had interrupted the copious lingual flow of his partner, and saw him gazing at the blue car and its occupant with such surprised malevolence that he hastily jerked the window shade down its full length and shoved the old gentleman away from the casement. The usually cherubic and benign old countenance was twisted into a mask of hate calculated to frighten a wooden Bacchus into signing the pledge. Kingsley took his old compatriot by the arm and shook him gently.

"Hey! Come out of it!" he exclaimed. "First thing you know you'll get pinched for murder, mayhem, arson and carrying concealed weapons. My goodness, what a face!"

Mr. Simpson pointed a shaking, agitated forefinger in the general direction of the blue car and its occupant.

"That's Jim Blair, Larry!" he exclaimed with savage agitation. "Jim Blair, by hokey!"

Jimmie pulled aside the shade and looked superciliously at the fat man.

"He fails to excite me," he observed contemptuously. "Who was he, or is he? A sewer digger that found a quart of diamonds in a drain pipe? Fudge with him. Here, you come away from there now!"

The aged minister of guile suffered himself to be restowed in his armchair, where he breathed heavily and growled complainingly for some minutes. Then he smiled, and Mr. Kingsley exclaimed with relief.

"Some of these days you'll poison yourself with such thoughts as those," he complained. "You looked like two pounds of arsenic in a clam stew." He stooped to recover the volume of Plutarch he had dropped upon the floor. "What did that fat flial ever do to you?"

Mr. Simpson helped himself to a cigar and carefully pared the end from it; then he smiled an exceedingly wintry smile.

"It's twenty years since I set eyes on that eminent gazabo," he volunteered. "He passed me the ice pitcher in ninety-two."

Jimmie Kingsley seemed little interested.

"Is that so?" he commented negatively.

"Yes, that's so," replied Mr. Simpson, leaning forward. "That same peevish party used to be on the police. He was captain in the Two Hundred and Ninety-first Precinct, an' there's folks that is still sore about it, too."

"Why, wasn't he on the level?" asked Mr. Kingsley, trying to stifle a yawn.

Mr. Simpson sat up suddenly in his chair and looked at his young friend, evidently puzzled.

"You seemed all right a minute ago, Larry," he said, a trifle anxiously, and Jimmie looked up with a start.

"Eh?" he asked.

"Ain't feelin' queer, or anything now?" went on the old man, and Kingsley's face took on an equally puzzled expression.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded truculently, staring at his partner.

"There's nothing the matter with me, my lad," returned the old gentleman sourly. "It's you I'm bothered about. I'm tellin' you about a police captain, an' you ask me if he was on the level! Huh!" exclaimed Mr. Simpson disgustingly. "I thought you had more sense, Larry. Some o' these days some bright lad'll come along an' sell you a baby's go-cart disguised as a six-cylinder run-about, an' you ain't goin' to know th' difference until it's p'inted out that nursin' bottles don't make good carburetors."

Kingsley flushed, but made no comment, and Mr. Simpson relighted his cigar and condescended to elucidate.

"I was runnin' a little real estate game down on Sixth Avenue in them days," he said. "There was good change in it, too. I'd got a couple o' Long Island subdivisions faked up into buildin' lots, an' they was goin' like hot cakes. It's a fact that the guy that bought one had to use a rowboat an' a divin' suit to reach his property, an' that a bailin' dipper was more use than a spade; but that wasn't my fault. There was some holders, of course, an' I'd left five thousand

large iron dollars in Blair's desk for protection on a Monday. Protection!" scowled Mr. Simpson in huge disgust. "Believe me, Larry, that crook came around Tuesday an' pinched th' joint. I lammed out th' back way an' beat th' bulls to th' Grand Central by half a mile, an' I didn't come back for ten years!"

"What's he now? Inspector?" asked Jimmie.

"Nix! That's what hurts. He's sellin' fake Long Island real estate, an' makin' bundles of money out of it. An' he started on my money, an' copped my idea. Wouldn't that jolt you?"

Kingsley looked at the old man with a world of sorrow in his face.

"And you let him get away with it," he observed accusingly, whereat Mr. Simpson became as self-conscious as a boy caught with his hand in the sugar bowl. He positively blushed.

"I did," he replied, with a pained look in his bright old eyes. "I surely did, Larry, but *damnanti quod non intelligunt*, which means that even a wise guy never knows when he's goin' to be chucked into jail; a little sentiment, my boy, that makes a lot of us keep movin', an' is responsible for lettin' a lot o' Blairs get by."

Young Mr. Kingsley turned away to hide the smile that bubbled up from below, and his aged partner forthwith retired behind a wall of silence. Fully an hour passed, during which Kingsley, having made one or two abortive attempts at conversation, attempts to which the old man replied with all the sparkling chatter of a steamed clam, devoted himself to Plutarch. When the yellow peril who knocked down on the grocery bills announced another culinary crime, Mr. Simpson maintained his attitude of deep thought until he had waded halfway through the curry.

"He did have a pathetic sort of a look on his face," he observed at last, apparently indulging in a confidence with the teapot. Jimmie Kingsley looked at him sharply, but the other took no notice, and went on.

"They was nice bright colors, too," he said, nodding brightly at the bread.

"Looked like there'd bin a riot in a dye foundry."

Kingsley sat up a little in his chair and covertly watched his friend. Mr. Simpson's several chins were engaged in a little terpsichorean specialty of their own. They danced merrily into a little reel of three, changed suddenly into a madcap group of four, slipped into a chuckling two-step and then into a merry glide of five figures, relapsing with lightninglike rapidity into their original figure, and began all over again. The effect was as fascinating as watching a fat man walk down ice-coated steps.

"What's the difference between a Turk and a Armenian, Larry?" inquired Mr. Simpson after a chuckling pause. He, as a rule, made use of Jimmie's *nom de guerre* that might have been found on the police blotters of other days; the days when young Mr. Kingsley labored in the paths of applied science; those anxious years when he apparently had gone farther afield than Mr. Marconi, for Jimmie's wireless experiments were famous. He had a sure method of operating a telegraph office and getting track results with less than ten actual feet of wire—but that's a digression. Mr. Simpson waited a moment, and went on with a puzzled expression on his bland features. "Now a Turk an' a Armenian look about th' same to me, only that th' Turk seems a mite higher-flavored an' runs more to big pants an' assassination."

"I believe it's mostly religion," answered Jimmie, "with the Armenian at the tag end of the doxology and the Turk conducting the obsequies. Why?"

"Uh-huh!" nodded Mr. Simpson with a far-away look in his eyes. "He was a funny little cuss, now when you come to think of it, wasn't he?"

"Who?" demanded Mr. Kingsley with some asperity.

"Th' rug man th' cop chased," replied the old man.

"Oh, yes," assented his young partner.

"An' say, Larry, it's Syria an' Damascus an' Egypt that sends over camel-hair cigarets an' acrobats an' tin swords with brass trimmin's an' woozy shawls an' sphinxes, ain't it?"

"Something like that, Sim," agreed the younger man, watching his friend interestedly.

Mr. Simpson nodded his head sagely, as one whose thought processes had followed a satisfactory trail.

"So," he announced softly. "I guess we'll be able to take a bite at him in a couple o' weeks, now."

Jimmie looked up quickly, with a line between his brows.

"The rug man?" he inquired, and Mr. Simpson smiled in the manner of a man who had just discovered an ant on the loaf sugar.

"Why, no, Larry. Jim Blair, I mean. You see, I really ought to have squared up with him quite a while ago." He paused in momentary reflection. "I wonder where he buys his supplies, now?"

"Who—Blair?" asked Kingsley.

"No, Larry; th' little rug man. How your mind does wander! You ought to learn to keep to one track o' thinkin', son. It's a bad habit, this flappin' about." He wagged a reproving finger at his young companion.

Young Mr. Kingsley flushed slowly to a dull red, and then exhibited signs of choking. He never had managed to accustom himself to the mental flittings of his old partner, and always felt a species of helplessness when Mr. Simpson's little plans for the undoing of the rapaciously prosperous or the feloniously wicked were in process of formation.

"What's the little game?" he asked at last. "Under which shell will the festive pea be found?"

"Rugs, my boy!" observed Mr. Simpson sententiously. "Oriental rugs. Where's your head? What else have I been talkin' about but rugs an' Blair?"

"Blair!" exclaimed Jimmie, with wide-eyed surprise. "What's he to do with rugs?"

Mr. Simpson shook his head with saddened regret.

"You really can't expect to do high class work with that there little single-cylinder thinker o' yours, son," he said regretfully. "I guess the mixture ain't rich enough. Well, we can't all be top-notchers; so hitch your chair over here,

and I'll put it across to you in words of one syllable."

He pushed himself back from the table and apparently sought inspiration from the ceiling.

"Here's a couple of facts, Larry. First, the average Oriental rug that is peddled around is a bunk, ain't it? Well, then, we're pretty safe in assumin' that the copper that has been chased out of the front door of headquarters for graftin' ain't headin' any vice crusade. An' now we come down to a real hard fact. It's th' crooked man that falls hardest for th' crooked game." He paused and smiled a little wearily. "I never thought to tell it, but I've got enough fake minin' stock to paper a saloon with. However, get this in your mind. If you want to sell a gold brick, don't pick out a farmer. He's liable to holler for th' sheriff an' get you pinched. Pick out th' guy that's been workin' th' sick engineer gag, or th' Spanish prisoner, in th' next county. It's safer, an' he'll cough up easier."

"I'll confess I don't just get it," said Kingsley with a puzzled frown. Mr. Simpson smiled with an air of the wisdom of the ages, and tossed over the newspaper.

"Read that," he said briefly. "Th' place where I marked it. Read it out loud."

Jimmie read as requested:

"Mr. James Blair, the real estate operator, was one of the heavy purchasers at the Philip O'Rell sale yesterday. Mr. Blair became the possessor of a choice Daghestan rug at the top price of thirty thousand dollars. He also was the bidder for some old Sheffield plate of the rose border design. The sale is continued to-day."

Mr. Kingsley looked up blankly, and Mr. Simpson permitted a pitying smile to play tag with his features.

"It's as clear as mud to me," said Jimmie helplessly.

"You don't have to hang out any sign lettin' folks knows you got rooms to let, do you?" Simpson observed, tapping his forehead significantly. "Close that pantry door so Matsu won't cable what I'm goin' to tell you to the Mikado."

During the next hour Mr. Simpson explained, illustrated and described in de-

tail his joyous plan for taking back his own with heavy interest, and as he talked Mr. Kingsley's mobile face took on a look of amazement that slid by slow degrees into amusement and thence to delirious joy.

"An' here's th' last item," said Mr. Simpson briskly. "Is there any use in supposin' you know a loom when you see one?"

"Loom?" queried Jimmie blankly. "Sure you don't mean gloom?"

"No, nor broom, nor plume, nor doom, nor tomb, though I'm liable to give you a chance to get a good, first hand, workin' knowledge o' that last," snapped Mr. Simpson. "Loom! L-O-O-M, loom! A thing that weaves. Warp—woof—weave—get it?"

Mr. Kingsley nodded brightly.

"Surely," he agreed. "As Wally Scott says:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!"

Mr. Simpson waved his fat hand.

"Have it your way, son," he said. "I ain't much on them actor boys, but your pal, Wally, has th' idee. We're goin' to weave a web that's goin' to deceive a certain party so good and plenty that he'll have to hock that benzine buggy o' his before he gets through."

"I know a loom when I see it," said Kingsley.

"Then you run out an' get one, an' likewise hunt up a wop to be chief engineer of it. There used to be one on Broadway below Twenty-second Street. They had it in a window."

"Wop or loom?" inquired Jimmie innocently.

"Both!" snapped Mr. Simpson with a savage glare. Jimmie Kingsley took out a notebook ostentatiously.

"One loom; one wop," he repeated, moistening the lead pencil with his tongue and making a show of jotting down the specifications. "Must said wop be of any particular brand?"

"Jus' so he looks hairy an' smells Oriental," replied Simpson shortly.

"And when I have the loop over his front feet," went on Jimmie, "what then?"

"Slip him a ten-spot and make signs

to him that there's more where that came from when he learns to eat out o' your hand," answered the old gentleman. "Then hire a loft somewhere, an' plant him an' his infernal machine in it. When you get that done, come back here an' we'll see about practisin' a little with the tools. Beat it now! I'm goin' shoppin' for somethin' I don't know much about, but I bet they can't stick me with it."

Two weeks or so after he had involuntarily tried to decrease the visible supply of Armenians with his motor car, James Blair was turning himself about before a pier glass in his private office. He was admiring the set of a rag carpet design he was wearing as a waistcoat when the embryo yeggman who acted as his office boy entered with a card. Blair took it and read:

MR. G. FORTESCU BARING
Mogabgib & Co. Temiskauskura

Mr. Blair cast a covert glance at the youthful highbinder in time to see him sneak a cigar from the box upon the desk and hide it between the buttons of his jacket.

"What's this party want?" he inquired, taking the boy by the shoulder and casually retrieving the cigar.

"Ten minutes o' your time, he says," replied the unabashed youth.

"Huh! What's he look like?"

"Fift' Avenoo an' Nooport."

"Th' real thing, eh? Well, chase him in here, an' mind you don't pinch his watch while you're doin' it," admonished the real estate man. "Better let him wait a few minutes."

Blair had turned about for the eighth time, when he happened to glance up and catch sight of young Mr. Kingsley in the doorway, gazing with an expression of rapt admiration at the riotous waistcoat. He sized the young man up carefully, after the manner of the ward man accustomed to estimate the amount of weekly tribute an applicant will stand for, and made up his mind that the visitor was genuine.

"Like it?" he inquired modestly, turning about.

"Beautiful!" breathed Jimmie fervently. "Of course you wouldn't tell where you got it," he went on regretfully.

"Sure I would," replied the flattered ex-policeman. "Th' Four Little Tailors made it for me. They build all my rags."

"Ah, yes," commented Kingsley sagely; "and I see that one of them—"

"Cut that out, now!" cried Blair, whirling on him fiercely.

"I beg your pardon?" said Jimmie wonderingly.

"Don't you try handin' me that funny gag about one of 'em being soused!" Blair went on savagely, and glaring into his visitor's face. "I've stood for that about as long as I'm goin' to."

Mr. Kingsley gazed at him very calmly and innocently, much in the manner of one whose sad fate in life it is to be misunderstood and made a doormat for other people's muddy mental footprints.

"I was merely about to remark that one of them at least is an artist," he said a little sadly.

Blair released the tension of his bulldog jaw and held out his hand.

"That's different, an' I beg your pardon," he said heartily. "You see, I get handed th' raw bird too blamed much by a lot o' geezers that don't know what swell dressin' is. Guys that don't know a Prince Albert from a Navajo blanket. By th' way, what're these here code words down on th' bottom o' your card?"

Jimmie smiled patiently and genially.

"That is our firm name and the city where we have our headquarters," he replied.

"You have to hire help to say it, don't you?" asked Blair, with a dog-toothed grin.

"Oh, yes," answered Kingsley, with a touch of weariness in his tone. "I carry a couple of valets just for that. I get that gag pretty often, too."

Blair scowled slightly at the implied rebuke, and struggled into his coat with the graceful motion of a hippopotamus going up a scaling ladder.

"It's over my head," he muttered.

"It isn't hard when you've caught the trick," said Kingsley. "You just leave out all the 'g's' and go to bat with what's left. I'll admit it does sound a whole

lot like the early morning talk in an infant asylum, but it's a good firm. The town—Temiskauskura—is about four hundred miles from Constantinople. In Daghestan, you know." He glanced out of the corner of his eye for a sign of interest from the potential victim.

"Daghestan, eh?" said Blair, sitting down at his desk. "Ain't that where they make th' rugs?"

"Yes. We're the only real dealers in genuine Daghestans. Our men are out after them all the time."

Blair nodded slowly, as befitted a connoisseur, and rocked gently in his chair.

"I got one. A real Dag," he volunteered. "Got it at the O'Rell sale. It's a peach."

"I know it. That's what brought me here," observed Jimmie Kingsley casually. "A man that's got the nerve to pay thirty thousand for a gem rug is the kind of a sport I'm after."

"That so?" queried Blair suspiciously. "What was it you wanted to see me about, then?"

"Rugs," answered the young man briefly.

"Nix," declared the other. "Nothin' doin'."

"Oh, don't be afraid. I'm not trying to sell you any," laughed Jimmie. "We're not chasing customers, my good man. They pursue us and beg for rugs. O'Rell begged three years for that specimen you've got."

"Oh!" said Blair a little blankly, and apparently waited for Kingsley to go on.

"Will we be interrupted here?" the visitor asked, dropping his voice to a confidential tone.

"I'll dare 'em to," said the other, lighting a cigar about the size of Major Doyle's walking stick, and then pushing the box over with the air of a martyr who hopes his sacrifice won't be required of him.

"I've got a proposition and I need help," said Kingsley. "Only a man who knows rugs and loves them will do. That's why I come to you. A man who's willing to go as far as you did, and don't squeal, fills the bill." He drew his chair closer and dropped his voice. "I've just got back from Temiskaus-

kura, and I want to stay here. I wouldn't trade a Broadway trolley car for the Yildiz Palace, Mr. Blair, and that's a solid fact. Now look here. Suppose you could get the best grade of gem rugs into this country at sixty percent less than they cost now, eh?"

"Smugglin'?" asked Blair, raising his eyebrows until they associated with his front hair.

"Not!" emphatically declared Jimmie. "That's criminal; and besides, you couldn't get away with it."

"Well?"

"What's the matter with making them here?"

"Fakin' 'em?" asked Blair, puffing his cigar.

"No. The real things. Bring the weavers over here. Use American wool and import the dyes."

Blair looked at the young man with a twinkle in his piglike eyes.

"Kiddin'?" he demanded humorously.

"Not on your daguerreotype!" said Jimmie emphatically. "By the way, do you know how much is spent here every year for rugs?" he asked suddenly.

Blair shook his fat head.

"Anywhere from fifteen to twenty million," asseverated Jimmie solemnly.

"Suppose we could only get ten percent of the trade, and made fifty percent on that!"

The ponderous real estate man made a labored mental calculation, and his mouth dropped so far that the cigar fell out of the corner of it.

"It kicks th' slats out o' peddlin' lots," he said in an awed tone.

"It does," agreed Kingsley. "Look here. I'll make you a proposition. I know the country, the weavers and the business. You know rugs and people. How does it hit you?"

Suspicion began to prod at the elbow of Mr. Blair, and he turned the desk lieutenant stare on his caller.

"Why don't your firm back you?" he demanded, with the air of the man who has just found the corpse of a roach clogging the progress of a ninety-cent alarm clock. Jimmie laughed.

"And where do you suppose I'd come

in?" he asked. "I'd get a vote of thanks and a chance to add up the profits. That would let me out. Not for little Egbert!"

"You make a good talk," admitted Blair.

"And I can make a better show," retorted Kingsley. "You tinkle that bell of yours and send your boy for the bundle that is downstairs in my cab."

Impressed by the visitor's confident air, Blair gave the necessary orders.

"A man that buys rugs from a famous collection must know something about them," proceeded Jimmie. "No man could hand you a phony one, could he? Nor even a second, or an acid-aged specimen. Well, here's where I make you sit up, Mister Man!"

The office boy entered with a package of fair dimensions and retired.

"I'm going to show you a rug made by one of my own men right here in the city. To prove to you that I'm talking straight goods, I've had him weave your initials in the center of it. Take a peek at that!"

He pulled the wrapping paper from a beautiful three-by-six rose rug and threw it out upon the floor. In the center appeared the letters, "J. B." Jimmie knew it was a good rug, for Mr. Simpson had paid three hundred dollars for it, and the loom and its operator had done the rest. It was as simple a job of doctoring as that patient expert had ever tackled.

"Well, how about it, my friend?" asked Kingsley, with the truculent air of the man sure of his ground. Blair got up in some haste and waddled around the rug as it lay upon the floor. His features bore a remarkable resemblance to a fat goldfish glaring out of a glass globe. He felt the rug, smelt it, pulled at the edges and made a pretense of counting the knots. Finally he sat down again.

"You got me," he confessed. "It's the goods, but was it made here?"

"Those are your initials, aren't they?" Mr. James Kingsley asked defiantly, and shuddered to think of the desecration. "Well, that rug was woven on Nineteenth Street. Get your hat and I'll

show you another one on the loom right now. I'm not asking you to take my word for it. I'll deliver the goods, all right; and what's more, I'll put 'em right in your hand!"

The ponderous real estate man looked at Kingsley for a full minute, and the young man bore the gaze unflinchingly.

Finally the fat man breathed heavily.

"I'll go you," he said briefly, and reached for his woolly chapeau.

"Wait a minute," said Kingsley, with a smile. "We don't want to crowd the mourners. Suppose I make good; will you put in?"

"How much?" demanded Blair.

"Fifty thousand. I'll have to bring over at least ten looms and twenty weavers. Some will want to bring their families. Then I've got to hire a factory. It takes the long green."

"That's a wad of coin," protested Blair doubtfully.

"Yes, and it takes a small wad to make a big bundle. Why, man alive, you ought to get that back out of fifteen rugs!"

The big man made another laborious calculation, this time on the blotter, and then his teeth snapped.

"Joplin, Missouri, is my home town," he said figuratively. "Just show your Uncle Dudley an' you'll get th' cushmachree. Say, how about this rug?"

"That?" said Jimmie carelessly. "Oh, leave it on the floor. Call it an advance dividend, if you like."

"By crikey, but I like you, young feller!" declared the ex-policeman, and dropped a hand of the graceful proportions of a Westphalian ham upon his caller's shoulder. "You're a game kid, an' no piker! That rug's worth a couple o' hundred, anyway!"

In a loft on Nineteenth Street, where the light was not too good, Mr. Simpson sat watching a patient and somewhat motheaten Armenian gentleman laboriously pulling the shuttle of a primitive loom. Few indeed of his acquaintance would have recognized the astute old fox, for the costume he wore made him look like an ancient and correspondingly wicked Bashibazouk waiting to play handball with a couple of bayonets and

a few small Christians. On a tabouret near him reposed a nargileh. The old schemer had attempted to smoke this, and was now engaged in regretting the indiscretion.

"Here we are!" announced young Mr. Kingsley loudly just before he opened the door. "Here we have the fancy little works, and here also the fancy little workers. Give your order, gentlemen!"

Mr. Blair allowed the door to swing wide open before he set foot inside the threshold. It was an old caution from the days when some doors vomited ponderable objects when tapped upon.

Jimmie conducted his captive to the loom where the weaver was engaged. There was not yet sufficient of the work to estimate how great a misfortune it would turn out to be, but it was evidence of the slowly increasing kind.

"This one is the working weaver," Kingsley explained blandly. "That old party over there with the *lignum vite* features and the antique oak disposition is a village head man." He indicated Mr. Simpson with a wave of his hand, and that irritable old person scowled. "He's scheduled to be a sort of foreman of the works," the young man went on airily. "A main designer, and so forth. He's here to see that things are as I represented them, and he'll go back home and bring over his tribe of flea-traps."

"Does he understand United States?" inquired Blair, who had been interested in the crabbed features of Mr. Simpson.

"Not a line," replied Jimmie cheerfully. "He's just about as thick-headed an old gink as ever clipped another man's sheep. If you knew him as well as I do, you'd thank your stars that you don't have to listen to him. My goodness, but you've no idea what a mean old devil he is! Why, he couldn't live with a fishworm without starting a quarrel with it!"

Blair laughed. Mr. James F. Kingsley was enjoying himself thoroughly. This was the first time in years that he'd had an opportunity to rag his old partner without the fear of retaliation, and he meant to make the most of it. Mr.

Simpson caught the devils in Jimmie's eye, and tried to send forth a warning.

"H-m-m-m!" he ejaculated, fixing a baleful eye on the young man.

"What's that he's sayin'?" asked Blair with interest, and Kingsley smiled.

"He's sore because I won't let him keep a goat up here," he explained carefully. "He's used to having a goat around, and likes to know there's company about, even in the dark, and he just can't understand why the board of health isn't in sympathy with the idea. Of course some goats are all right, but at home I'm afraid he's been accustomed to a different set. More strong-minded, you know."

Blair had been watching Mr. Simpson with the interest one would give to a five-legged calf or a two-headed rooster.

"He sort of reminds me of an old feller I used to know once," he said musingly. "An old duck that was so thick-headed you had to bounce a cobblestone off it before you could get an idea inside. That was when I was on th' force. I ran him out o' town because there was so many complaints about his rough work. I always had th' idee they'd pinch him for petty larceny or robbin' kids."

If Kingsley had been anywhere else he would have dashed out to hunt a corner where he could enjoy a private fit, for Mr. Simpson's expression was that of a short fat man who had just been shoved under a cold shower. He managed to choke down his feelings, however.

"Your man had nothing on this old rascal when it comes to being obtuse," he told Blair, and thereupon fell to examining the rug weaving to hide his quivering features. Blair continued to regard the apoplectic Mr. Simpson.

"You take a tip from me, lad," he said warningly. "That old burglar is liable to slip a knife between your slats one o' these days. You can't trust that ignorant kind!"

Jimmie affected to laugh lightly, but at that moment, happening to catch a glimpse of the malevolence in Mr. Simpson's savage old eyes, he thought better of his little joke. As a matter of fact, the old man had come within an ace of

taking violent action, and only the strongest kind of professional pride had prevented him from explaining his position with the tabouret and the nargileh, or such other furniture as was handy.

Blair watched the patient fingers of the innocent weaver for some minutes, and turned to Kingsley.

"Who stands for you?" he demanded. "Put me wise to where I can get a line on you, an' we can do business."

"You'll have to use the cable," said Jimmie frankly. "Rothschild in Paris, and the consul in Temiskaukura."

"That'll do," said the big man. "Come along an' mangle a steak with me, we'll talk it over."

Late that night Jimmie Kingsley let himself into the Riverside Drive apartment. He was whistling joyously.

"Hooked!" he cried, and dodged a heavy dictionary which sped forth from the living room door.

"He fell!" he went on, permitting the humidior to pass him and smash a mirror in the hall. "Don't throw the clock!" he cried. "You couldn't hit me, anyway! He bit hard, and if you've finished moving the flat I'll tell you about it," he concluded.

Mr. Simpson looked at his young friend sorrowfully. He had a footstool clutched in his hand. Then he smiled.

"You sure had me goin' this afternoon, Larry," he chuckled, "an' for two cents I'd a' started somethin' that that fat stiff'd have had trouble in stoppin'. However, I guess I am an old goat, an' that's a fact."

Jimmie Kingsley threw himself into the morris chair he affected, lighted a cigarette and cocked his feet at a comfortable angle upon the window sill.

"Our little playmate comes across tomorrow morning," he announced. "I took him over to the Ritz and up to that fifteen-dollar-a-day suite you made me hire. After I'd showed him the maps, the pictures, the timetables and the rest of the junk you collected, he decided he was our huckleberry. He told me confidentially that he's ribbing up a land investment corporation that the boobs will fall hard for, and that will make this

trick velvet. He sat there and wrote the cables to the Paris and Tiflis addresses I gave him. There's no chance of a slip-up there, I suppose?"

Jimmie looked somewhat anxiously at his genial old partner.

Mr. Simpson smiled expansively and tolerantly.

"I'm so good at layin' pipe, Larry, that th' gas company is thinkin' about gettin' from business," he replied genially. "Be easy, lad. That bell-hop brought these cablegrams right along up to Uncle Jerry. Tom Collins'll be along in th' mornin' an' he'll fake up a couple of answers. Old Dr. Blair'll get 'em in th' afternoon. That reminds me that the telegraph blanks an' envelopes 're gettin' low. You want to get some more some time this week. What's her name, son? I mean th' one with th' red hair."

Mr. Kingsley replied with a sofa pillow, and Mr. Simpson chuckled.

"Now you better beat it back to th' Ritz," the old gentleman observed. "Blair might take it into his fat head to call you on th' phone, an' you want to be on th' job."

Thirty-six hours later, accompanied by Mr. Kingsley, the astute Mr. Blair purchased from his bank drafts on London and Constantinople to the tune of fifty thousand dollars, from which it may be inferred that the tenor of the fabricated cablegrams was such as to inspire unlimited confidence in the object of them, thus justifying Mr. Simpson's estimate of the gullibility of those who move on the edge of the law. These drafts Blair turned over to Kingsley with some misgivings but great anxiety to share in the potential profits. The remaining details are comparatively insignificant.

Jimmie Kingsley had actually arranged to sail on a Mediterranean Cunarder in the morning at the unholy hour of five thirty, and ostensibly made arrangements to go aboard that night. First, however, he arranged to have a farewell dinner with his new partner at the Ritz, and to that end he engaged to meet the porcine Mr. Blair precisely at seven in the main corridor.

There are a dozen channels through which drafts can be turned into immediately available cash at a comparatively negligible discount, and between noon and three in the afternoon that day the firm of Simpson & Kingsley was richer to the tune of \$45,000; a sum they divided with extreme and scrupulous exactitude.

Blair, the innocently wise victim of the rug industry, hung about the corridors of the glittering hotel until the clock chimed the quarter after the hour, and then, growing both hungry and impatient, decided to remind his new friend that the hour did wax late. He went to the desk and instituted an inquiry, whereat the clerk stared at him with an extra degree of superciliousness.

"Are you Mr. Blair?" he asked coldly.

"That's me—Blair," replied that individual.

"Then this is for you, I imagine," returned the haughty one, passing over a neat square envelope.

With what was perhaps a faint shaking of premonition that centered in his fat jowls, Blair tore the missive open. While the employees of the hotel picked the limp and heavy body of Mr. Blair up from the tiled floor and bore him into an anteroom, the clerk telephoned for a physician, and the house detective read the crushed note he took from the pudgy hand:

DEAR JIM:

This is just a line to remind you that it is a long worm that has no turning. You stole five thousand from me twenty years ago. I've just taken it back with interest at 100 percent. You won't make much on rugs. Remember that it's the old crook that falls hardest.

JERRY SIMPSON.

"Huh!" observed the house detective darkly. "He's got trimmed," with which brilliant evidence of his deductive powers he searched for Mr. Blair's address, found it, ordered a cab and sent that eminent financier away in it.

Two weeks later Mr. Simpson sat in his comfortable chair near the open window of the little apartment, and shuffled some papers he had just removed from a bulky envelope.

"There's nothin' like the land as a solid investment, Larry," he said platonically. "Real property's th' basis of all value."

Mr. Kingsley looked up with bored interest.

"Buying business blocks?" he inquired lazily, and Mr. Simpson chuckled.

"Not so you could notice it," he replied. "I'm puttin' mine in where it'll get action."

"Oh!" said Kingsley. "How much?"

"I took my end of the rug deal an' bought twenty-two shares in a realty investment corporation," declared the old gentleman proudly, tossing over a bundle of handsomely engraved certificates. "Climax Realty Investment Corporation, my son."

Young Mr. Kingsley sat up straight in his chair and flipped the gaudy papers over. A small, retiring smile made its appearance upon his face, and this gradually expanded into an insulting grin, which in turn dissolved into the expression of a hilarious gargoyle that had been tickled in the ribs. He began to laugh, and it was not until Mr. Simpson savagely threatened him with bodily violence that he wiped his eyes and found speech.

"It's you for the diving suit, the row-boat and the tin dipper!" he cried weakly. "Oh-h-h!"

"Th' what?" asked Mr. Simpson with a premonitory shiver.

"The paraphernalia you said a fellow had to use to find the lots you used to sell him—down on Long Island, you know!" cried Jimmie hysterically, holding his handkerchief to his mouth.

"What's that got to do with me?" demanded the old gentleman, turning a pale green about the chin.

"The Climax is the finish!" Kingsley choked. "Did you notice every one of these certificates is signed by James Blair, president?" His eyes danced. "You're right, Sim. The old crook falls the hardest! And after I told you he was fixing up a plant for the boobs! . . . Why—here! What's up?"

But Mr. Simpson had fainted for the first time in his life.

MAIDEN LANE

By Louis Untermeyer

HOW royally the city can appear—
How full of fire and splendor can she grow,
When decked with pearls, filched from a sea god's bier,
Or gems that were the eyes of idols; lo,
The treasures of the earth and sea are here—
And kingdoms piled on kingdoms blink and leer
Beneath the glow.

And are these bits of glass that deck her gown,
And fall in golden showers to her hem,
The things for which the many play the clown,
By trading godhood for a gaudy gem?
Here are rich tinsels, pebbles of renown,
That are the jewels in Dishonor's crown,
Her dazzling diadem.

How royally the city can appear—
But not a shout acclaims her now; instead,
An evil muttering assails the ear,
A threatening whisper, bearing fire and dread.
Can this be true, this fearful thing we hear,
That there are some—and oh, so sadly near—
Even in need of bread?



CLARA—May I borrow your beaded belt, dear?
BESS—Certainly. But why all this formality of asking permission?
"I can't find it."



SOCIETY buds never have a desire to blossom into wallflowers.



THE mean time—next morning.

WASHINGTON—THE HOME OF THE CLIMBER

By J. Frederick Essary

JUST as Washington is unlike any other of our cities, as a municipality, so is the character of the Washington people just a trifle different, somehow, from that of other people.

There is no apparent reason for this difference, since the bulk of the capital's population has been recruited from the States, yet the difference is there. Anybody can see it who goes to Washington to live. Some change comes over people, once they cross the District line and go to abide among the mighty in the land. Old ties are abandoned; new pursuits engage their energies.

The town itself is unique, as a town. It was a hand-made product to begin with. It started out in life under the auspices of the government. It has grown strong and beautiful by the same liberal patronage. It has a Congress for a city council. It has no mayor at all, and no substitute for a mayor. Its people have no local politics or voice in the power that rules them. They therefore feel no responsibility to each other for their mutual welfare. A federal treasury supplies half the money to run the town. The people supply the other half without even half a say as to how one dollar of the municipal income is to be expended.

As is natural under these circumstances, Washingtonians have no consuming pride in the bigness or goodness of their city. Not one in a hundred of them has had anything to do with that bigness except perhaps to add himself to the sum total of the city's

population. They feel no joy in the coming of a new factory, for no factories ever come. They boast not of their commercial importance, for there is no commerce to boast of except that confined to the city's limits. The increase in their postal receipts, their railway tonnage and their bank clearings inspire no boomer spirit in them.

These are some of the oddities that place the nation's capital in a class of its own. And its people, bereft of that local patriotism that has gone far to make scores of weak American communities grow strong and the strong grow great, have centered all their interests in themselves. Their commanding aim in life is to reach a little higher station in politics or society, or both. They have made theirs essentially a city of climbers. There is none on the continent like it for climbing, and there is none to compare with it for opportunities to climb. There are sets upon sets, circles within circles and planes above planes.

First of all, it is a climb to get to Washington. The clerk in the store back home no doubt labored hard and long to get his job in the civil service. The budding politician from the same neighborhood experienced his first thrill of glory, perhaps, when he became secretary to a Congressman. The Congressman himself worked day and night, suffered many defeats and survived many vicissitudes to achieve his election to the House. The governor of the State spent many years in organizing the campaign that finally put him in the Senate.

Therefore the climb began before Washington was reached. Having arrived in the capital and absorbed a little of its spirit, the ambition to go higher soon becomes an obsession. The clerk wants to be a chief clerk, then a division head, then an assistant secretary, and after that, who knows, a Cabinet portfolio might lie ahead. The Congressman wants to come back and keep coming back until he can take the usual route to the Senate, via the governorship. Once a Senator, he wants seniority. Seniority means powerful committee chairmanships, big legislation, statecraft and—fame.

And along with political preferment goes social prestige. They are concomitant in Washington. To edge up a notch on the political ladder guarantees a little more social favor, all else being equal. Once seized with social aspirations, the Washingtonian knows no restraints. To figure with the more elite becomes a passion with him. The department clerk learns to covet his neighbor's automobile, to envy his neighbor his two servants and to long for a five-room flat instead of his of two and the kitchenette.

The victorious Congressman, when he lands in town, may harbor sincere scorn for the foibles and follies of society. He may scoff honestly at the dress suit and the high hat, but he inevitably becomes reconciled to these frills the first time he finds himself the only dinner guest who has failed to attire himself appropriately. Even our Senator becomes possessed with a desire to associate himself with the charmed circle of the capital's "exclusives." He justifies this with the reasoning to himself that his influence with the Administration is bound to increase in the same ratio as do his intimacies with the "powers that be."

The politicians and civil office holders are not alone in this class, however. The army and navy officers and the diplomatic agents of the government yearn for that order which assigns them to the Department. The luxurious service clubs, the official recognition, the marriageable heiresses and the en-

tertaining allure the soldier and the sailor alike. Once in the revolving office chair, the saddle and the battleship bridge are forgotten. The rolling plains and the rolling waves fade gently from view. The fighting man becomes a mere clerk and his happiness is complete.

The city's geography figures prominently in establishing the social strata of the capital. Even the guide is impressed with this when he pilots the wide-eyed and wondering visitor around Washington and delivers his stereotyped lecture from the quarter-deck of a sightseeing car. He first tells his fascinating story of the glory that was and the grandeur that is, pointing with eloquent gesture to "yon glittering domes, the sky piercing monument and the vast piles of granite that house the governmental machinery." In subdued tones he directs attention to the ancient hotel where Henry Clay died and to the old theater where Lincoln was shot. He comments with reverential feeling upon the statuary scattered about, memorializing the human greatness that has flourished and gone.

Then, as the big car swings heavily into Sheridan or DuPont Circle, the lecturer says: "Ah, my friends, here are the homes of the bon-tons, the rich and the highfliers. You are now in the Northwest section. Here live the foreign diplomats, the Cabinet officers, the generals and the admirals. Some Senators live in this part of the town, too, but not many Congressmen or people like that."

The fact must be chronicled, though, that there is a vast, an abysmal difference between the view of Washington from a canopied seat in a big automobile, and Washington at the white-of-the-eye range. The glamour that amounts to enchantment from afar somehow seems to fade when it comes to rubbing elbows with the people who are making history and with those who are the daily witnesses to the proceeding.

This contact with the country's famous men is disillusioning. This

living next door to the White House and the Capitol tends inevitably to dissolve the shadow-of-the-great-dome feeling, the splendid-halls-of-Congress atmosphere. This awe of the sacred portal somehow vanishes. It shows how anything may become commonplace.

Then, too, there is a wide difference between the dream of holding a soft federal job with big pay and no work, and the reality of having one that begins with a thousand a year, and ends twenty years later at twelve hundred. Again, there is a shocking difference between one's mental picture of the commanding Congressional leader, surrounded by applauding colleagues, and the unheard-of and disappointed Congressman whose usefulness to the nation is measured only by the seeds he sends back home. And there is a sad difference between the tempting vision of the social queen, the conquering beauty, and the poor pathetic little country belle, introduced to Washington society, yet passing along unseen, unsought and unpursued.

A few seasoned and cynical Washingtonians like to prate about these differences. By these seasoned persons is meant those old timers who associate all events with the Forty-ninth or the Fifty-second Congress, or perhaps with the first Grant or the second McKinley administration, instead of associating them like other folks, with some calendar year. They are the people who have no reverence for anything in town. They care nothing about the "magnificent distances," the silver-tongued orators, the imposing marble structures. They barely turn their heads when the President motors past, and they refuse to be inspired even by an inaugural parade. They know for a certainty that all current statesmen are demagogues; they know that the gold is peeling off the tower of the Library and that the famed marble pillars of the Treasury are hollow.

They are not the typical Washingtonians, however. They have long passed the typical stage, and cease to count except in the census enumera-

tion. The typical townsmen are the patriots from the "provinces" who have, by some sort of strategy, become attached to the government payroll, and who have come to the capital filled with swelling hope and expanding aspirations. There are thousands of them, too—almost tens of thousands. They make up the climber class. They want fame. They want to get into politics, big politics; or if not that, to start with, they want high society. They want to be invited out, and want the newspapers to print their names among those present. Marked copies of these papers are useful for mailing purposes.

If these newcomers develop enough resource and keep at it, they may some day begin to figure. They can always establish a speaking acquaintance with a few celebrities, and can impress an out-of-town friend, if one happens to drop in from down home, with a fine line of conversation, breathing familiarity with the great and the near-great. They soon learn to talk with affected indifference but with unaffected persistence, of Secretary this or Senator that or Congressman the other. They acquire cocksure opinions of the personages whom they talk about, and never fail to criticize with an air of first hand knowledge.

When all is said, though, there is not much else in Washington but official life. There are a few thousand people accurately described by the apartment house signs as "tradesmen," but they are not in it. Leaving them out, and leaving out a scattering thousand or so of retired rich and professional practitioners, the remainder is official. Beginning with the President and ranging down to the modest department clerk, all of them are federal job holders.

The gradations of official life create corresponding degrees in the social life of the city. There are sets without end here. There is the Cabinet set, the diplomatic set, the Senatorial set, the Congressional set, the army and navy set, the department clerk set. There is a special set of the retired rich, and there is another for the aristocratic

persons who may or may not have visible means of support.

To climb from one set to another is the dream of the Washingtonian. All of them do not climb, but all of them try to; and there is no psychological difference between those who do climb and those who fail. Some of them may not graduate from the euchre parties of the department clerk set, yet all of them abide in the hope of some day receiving an invitation to a Congressional ball, or a Senatorial dinner or even to a secretary's at-home.

Official importance, of course, adds to the social opportunities. To have become a chief clerk in a government bureau opens the doors higher up to the aspirant, and to receive a Presidential appointment places one's name upon the official White House invitation list.

Recognition from the White House is, of course, the zenith of social importance to many of the citizens. The President and his family may not have any particular interest in the guests whom they invite, but that does not make any difference to the guests. The main thing is to get the invitation, and the scheming that goes on for bids to White House functions is so common that it is wholly shameless. Nobody hesitates at a little wire pulling if wire pulling seems necessary in this connection.

By placing much of the responsibility for the White House invitation lists upon the White House aides, the President and his wife have given these estimable young gentlemen an importance which their rank in the army or navy could never afford them. These officers, chosen not for their heroism in battle but for their social blandishments, generally graduate into a fine lot of snobs. Incidentally, this executive staff of fascinating knights is called upon to act as social arbiters in emergencies, and to determine grave questions of precedence.

During the Roosevelt administration, for instance, a bitter social feud developed, involving the precedence at official functions of the members of the United States Supreme Court and the

foreign diplomats of ambassadorial rank. The judges, or justices, as they are always called in Washington, regarded their position as superior to that of any foreigner who might be on American soil, and they delivered, or "handed down," many opinions to that effect. On the other hand, the ambassadors, being the personal representatives of their august sovereigns, couldn't see it that way and they said so in many tongues. Mr. Roosevelt, being essentially a politician, quite as much after elections as before, unloaded the responsibility of settling this dispute upon his aide, Colonel McCawley. The latter, playing safe, ruled that wisdom should follow diplomacy, and so it has ever since.

Speaking of that administration—it may have been strenuous up to a certain point, but it stood for peace and good will when it came to harmonizing the endless differences among the Cabinet members and their wives. The Cabinet is picked from many sections of the country and from many social stations. Therefore, when this group of men come together and their wives begin to commingle, natural conflicts in tastes and temperament arise. Some of the secretaries have lots of money; others haven't much. Some of them entertain lavishly; others do it modestly; and these conditions fail to promote that sweetness of disposition that should prevail in an official family. But the President and Mrs. Roosevelt were especially successful in ironing out all these differences, and promoting harmony.

Every year each member of the Cabinet gives a dinner to the President and to every other member and his wife. These are the most dreaded functions which the Cabinet hostesses have to endure. Each one of them, as a matter of pride, tries to outdo the one before her in the matter of menu and decorations, and the strain upon the last few of the line is maddening.

Until recently it was the custom to have as guests only the President and his wife and the other members of the Cabinet and their wives. So thorough-

ly bored did these folks become with each other, however, that before the season was half over a suggestion went out from the White House that a little variety might be injected into these dinners by inviting a few outsiders. The outsiders perhaps did not know it, but their presence was desired primarily because they were depended upon to be amusing.

President Taft, being a large man and having a famous smile, enjoys, or acts as if he enjoys, everything. He has smashed a good many sacred precedents since he has been in the White House. For instance, he from time to time goes visiting to the homes of old friends who have no official standing at all. No previous and proper President ever did that.

On one occasion he slipped away from his bodyguard, the inevitable secret service men, and walked a mile in a pouring rain to pass the time of day with an obscure friend. When the discovery was made that the President was "lost," a riot call was sent in by the Washington police, and every reserve on the force was called out to help find the First Citizen. When he feels like it now, he eludes his guard and goes for long walks. One day he slipped into the Capitol unheralded and had a look at Congress at work.

More unceremonious than any of these adventures, however, was the spectacle of a three-hundred-pound President dancing at a charity ball with a very slender young lady who had challenged him to do it. Washington was shocked for as long a period as Washington can remain shocked at any one thing, over this democratic, not to say plebeian, performance. Mr. Taft had a fine time, and the unknown young lady was the envy of every belle of all the sets in the capital's varied society.

The Tafts entertain upon an expensive scale. The old timers often wonder how they can do it. Their state affairs at the White House are lavish in decorations, in appointment and in refreshments. This matter of refreshments is one of the most popular of the

Taft policies. In the old days when Presidents entertained, the White House receptions amounted to little more than a large perspiring crowd of people eager to shake the executive hand.

In these happier days there is more, infinitely more, to these functions. There is real food, served by a regiment of White House servants. There is champagne punch—a little mild, it is true, but punch. And there is plenty of everything. The refreshments have never been known to run out. A good many guests suppose, of course, that all these salads and sandwiches and ices are prepared in the White House kitchen and are therefore things to be treasured in one's memory. The truth is that the food is purchased from caterers and has never been within a hundred feet of the White House stove.

One of these White House receptions is enough for the average citizen, he thinks, in spite of the music, the parade and the refreshments. Yet the second invitation, delivered by special and uniformed messenger, is welcomed heartily, and the honored citizen, even though he has attended a score before, usually crowds himself into his dress suit, spends good money for a taxicab and goes again.

It is a bit of a reflection on American manners that two naval aides are compelled to stand at the East Room entrance to force the crowd, jamming forward, to wait for the opportunity to greet the President and Mrs. Taft at these receptions. They spend three painful hours pleading with the people not to shove. The police forcing the crowd away from the path of the circus elephant have no more difficult job than these young officers in preventing the well dressed guests of the White House from stampeding.

The Diplomatic Reception is the most exclusive of all these affairs, if any party with a guest list of two thousand names can be called exclusive. It is at this function that the members of the Diplomatic Corps are given the opportunity to parade before the people in the full and resplendent uniform of

their rank. They cover their chests with medals and decorations and carry on their arms glittering and gorgeously plumed helmets. The sight of them suggests the ensemble of the nations of the world in a Wild West show. The negro diplomats from the West Indies mingle with the ambassadors from the European courts, and the Orientals, who have never learned to affect American clothes, are just as important at these affairs as are the Latin-Americans.

Rather tame, after this display of pomp and circumstance, is the Judiciary Reception. Wisdom is never alluring. The Congressional Reception is amusing for the reason that no Congressmen, save a few "first termers" ever go. The Elder Statesmen, having had enough of this kind of excitement at the first or the second reception of the season, turn their cards over to their secretaries when the third one rolls around. These secretaries, many of them wearing dress suits for the first time, accompanied by a very self-conscious lot of young women, make a little show all their own. The entertaining at the White House closes with the Army and Navy Reception, and this resolves itself into a full dress parade with admirals and generals in the same rank with lieutenants and ensigns.

Nowhere in the world, perhaps, is there as great a shortage of eligible bachelors in proportion to the total population, as in Washington, and nowhere else is this shortage felt so keenly. Ten thousand more than the normal supply could be used by Washington society without overstocking the market. By the time this number was divided and subdivided among the various sets the lot would be swallowed up and calls sent out for more.

There are numberless marriageable daughters in town. This is a sort of clearing house for debutantes. They are brought here by ambitious mothers by the score and launched hopefully upon the social sea. Mothers who cannot come along have fallen into the habit of sending the daughters to the seminaries and "finishing" schools scattered from end to end of the town.

Alluring advertisements of the "social advantages" offered by these schools have crowded the institutions for years, in spite of the fact that the "advantages" consist only of one informal reception at the White House given each year to the senior classes.

Every known bait has been tried upon the few members of the eligible bachelor colony of the capital by designing mothers. Once in a while a desirable is caught off his guard, nibbles and is landed. Most of them grow old, however, in single harness.

An energetic mother in the "exclusive" set the other day conceived an ingenious plan to promote the welfare of her daughter. She let it be known that the daughter was engaged to one of the city's most desirable bachelors. This fact, of course, got into print without delay, in spite of the further fact that the bachelor had not been consulted nor had ever been a caller at the alleged bride-to-be's home.

The next day the mother issued a vigorous denial of the engagement which she had herself admitted twenty-four hours before. When asked to explain the situation, she confidentially told the reporter that her daughter expected to be proposed to by quite the most famous eligible in the land, and that this fake announcement was intended to hurry matters along in the other quarter.

Marketable young diplomats are much sought after by the professional matchmakers in the capital. Every secretary of an embassy or a legation is regarded as a possible ambassador or minister, and for purposes of desirable marriage the diplomatic corps offers opportunities that are always welcomed. Incidentally the average young diplomat is without a private fortune, and is thoroughly convinced of the fact that to marry one will promote his own career. In other words, daughters without fat purses need not apply.

These diplomatic people are naturally a class unto themselves. Not all of them like each other, and some of them refuse even to get acquainted with any not enjoying the same rank

as themselves. The ambassadors give dinners to each other to which a minister is seldom invited. Also the diplomat who represents a king, and therefore a court, hasn't much use for the fellow who is only the spokesman for a President.

About all a diplomat amounts to in these latter days anyway is to provide a quick messenger service for his particular foreign office. No foreign representative makes one official move until he has consulted his government, and there is little left for him to do in Washington except entertain and be entertained. Occasionally a diplomat makes the mistake of having an opinion, as did the late Colombian minister. Whenever his government finds this out he is instantly recalled. To have an opinion is, theoretically, to be accompanied by a desire to express it. And to permit diplomats freedom of speech would mean war.

It is an inspiration to see the foreign colony on parade. They ride always in brilliantly painted carriages, sometimes with outriders and again with only a few grooms or footmen placed statuesquely before and behind. The Bakhmétéffs, the newly arrived Russians, are worth turning around to look at any day. Their grooms are heavily helmeted Cossacks, and their outriders look like mounted police. These newcomers brought their personal effects from St. Petersburg in ten huge steel cases, and when these went astray on the way over an "international incident" resulted.

Into this whirlpool of social sensation the Congressman comes and brings his family. Back home they are usually the élite. In Washington they are ignored, but they have no redress. No Member is invited to anything fashionable under ten years' service, except to the official White House functions. Sooner or later all of them have the usual yearning to climb the social ladder, but the opportunity is long denied. There are too many of them in the first place, and there is rarely one who would fit offhand.

There is a Congressional set, though,

that provides a balm. The wives and daughters of the Members get acquainted with each other, and then begin having parties and receptions all their own. This helps some, but it does not wholly satisfy.

The self-importance of the newly arrived statesman is soon dissipated. He finds, after a little surveying, that he has just one vote in the House and but little more. This he is permitted to cast perhaps once a week, and is rarely allowed to accompany it with a five-minute speech. His main service to his country and to his constituents during the first years of his membership in Congress is his ability to help make a quorum.

One illusioned Congressman came to town just before the opening of Congress, went to his hotel, planted his bags in his room, and before removing his hat, called up the city editor of a local paper to announce that he was then and there ready to be interviewed. The unfeeling editor was compelled to remind the statesman that, after he had been in Washington a little longer, he would get used to being a Congressman, and perhaps in ten or twelve years his views would be worth printing.

There are lots of people in Washington who take great pride in entertaining even a Congressman. It is an impressive thing to write to the folks back home, where the Member is of course regarded as an exalted being, to say that "a number of our Congressional friends dined with us last night." One ambitious parvenu takes her friends into her only guest chamber at every opportunity and points to the bed in which a Senator once slept. She adds, too, that nothing but the fact that the Senator honored her household keeps her from moving out of the neighborhood. She says that an engineer has just moved next door to her, and this engineer is so coarse that he sits on his front porch in his shirt sleeves.

This happened out at Chevy Chase, where there is a country club to which the fashionables go to play golf, bridge and poker. Only semi-fashionables and

the engineer actually live in this community. The high power society people still cluster around DuPont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue. It was in this neighborhood that the turkey trot was first introduced into Washington. It is here that a certain audacious and irresponsible lot gather from time to time and advertise themselves by giving Sunday night dances and all-night poker parties.

For the ultra-aristocracy, Georgetown is the place. Long ago Georgetown was geographically absorbed by Washington, but this suburb's population has never been assimilated. Amalgamation is impossible. To be aristocratic in Georgetown, one must be poor. One must have lost all one's fortune in the war. To possess money there is to create suspicion. Nobody ever moves into Georgetown, and nobody ever moves out. Washington people are looked down upon by all the old families beyond Rock Creek.

Only for Bladensburg, on the one side, and Alexandria, on the other, do the Georgetown people entertain a neighborly feeling. The former now lives only in name, while the latter is wholly extinct. They thrived, however, contemporaneously with Georgetown, before the Revolution; thus the bond.

While the people of Georgetown may live and die without a change of base, their neighbors in Washington rarely ever live under one roof longer than a year. This climbing habit possesses them all. To outlive one's neighbor, that is the aim of life. The scramble for higher things goes on the year round. The desire to find more desirable friends, to move in a better circle, prompts a change. This mania affects them in both the fall and spring, and they gather together their goods and chattels, their piano player and their baby carriage and depart for a flat, or perhaps a house promising richer and more snobbish friends.

The department clerk wants to live nearer the bureau chief, the bureau chief wants a closer intimacy with the assistant secretary, while the assistant

secretary expects sooner or later to move into the big house of the secretary.

Yet there is no way to tell, by the way they dress, whether the Washington women on the streets and in the cafés are the wives of Cabinet members and Senators, or whether they are stenographers. All of them are adorned as nearly like Parisians as they know how. They are all willow-plumed, rouged, coiffured. All of them march grandly up F Street at the same time in the afternoon and then march down again. On Sundays all of them drift leisurely into Connecticut Avenue for the promenade. There is no difference in appearance; there is no distinction in habits.

Even the Washington negro mingles with the Washington élite and near-élite wherever there are élite to mingle with. This Washington negro is a unique product. He is generally regarded here as a "colored" lady or gentleman. Occasionally an unreconstructed Southerner makes the mistake of calling him a "nigger," and this error is never forgiven.

Wherever the white man lives in Washington, the negro lives—if he has the money. Wherever the department clerk works, a negro may work. Whenever the Caucasian citizen goes to the theater, he may expect to find an African citizen occupying the next seat. By some abrogation of the Fourteenth Amendment, however, the hotel and restaurant keepers have managed to keep the colored brother from eating at the same table with the white customer.

Aside from the eating, absolute equality prevails between the races, and any previous condition of servitude that may have existed does not count. Nowhere in this glorious republic does the educated negro abound as he does in Washington. The housemaid who condescends to be a companion for one's wife, and to instruct her in house-keeping, for a few kopeks more perhaps will tutor one's children or give the daughter music lessons. Culture is the word.

ASHES OF MEMORY

By Jean Louise de Forest

HE was a man of medium size, strongly built and somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty, perchance between fifty and sixty. There were really no means of telling by his appearance just where between, since he possessed that irradiating freshness and cleanness and plumpness that belongs as a rule only to small children.

Tonight he sat alone, reading beneath the electric glow of an Oriental lamp which would have done credit to the taste of an emperor. Its light, softened by a pink bulb to the quality of old-fashioned lamplight, made of his thick, soft hair a nimbus as glistening as silver, but more intensely white, and disclosed a face as fresh and as devoid of lines as a boy's. It was almost uncanny, this mingling of youth and world experience, for world experience there must have been, since it showed in every choice bit of bric-à-brac, in every picture, in every book that looked down from the low bookcases extending halfway round the room.

The atmosphere of the place was one of complete sophistication to the things of the world as they are, and this atmosphere included Trent himself, for although his blue eyes were full and wide like a child's, there was something both inclusive and understanding in the very directness of their gaze, which made one feel at once that here was a man who knew life, knew it—and no longer troubled himself to entertain any opinions concerning it whatsoever.

From the top of the book case between the windows, and above the morocco row of Balzac's complete works, a bronze Buddha looked down placidly

through half-closed lids, while just opposite, Thorwaldsen's Christ stretched out beneficent hands toward the unheeding back of the room's occupant, who read on until he had finished his article. This accomplished, he rose with the ease and slowness that characterized all his motions, and went to the desk, where he seated himself, secured a small note from among the pile of recently arrived mail and opened it. He read:

MY DEAR MR. TRENT:

I read with interest your charming story, "The Inevitable," and am sending you this line via the magazine in which it appeared. If it is possible that you were the little Amherst Trent with whom I used to make mud pies, will you not forward the enclosed note to your brother Henry? I should be glad to hear from him. And let me congratulate you upon your success. I might have learned of it sooner, but that—as you know—my life has been passed until recently in foreign lands and among alien people.

Sincerely,

ELLEN MONTGOMERY HASTINGS.

Then followed the address, Trent's own New England home town, which he had not visited for over twenty-five years.

The missive was duly forwarded to him by his brother in New York, who had proved to be the "little Amherst," of mud pie days, and it had lain unanswered for nearly a week. Tonight, however, was destined to mark the limit of its neglect, for its recipient, after selecting a sheet from his remnant of heavy monogrammed paper, and a fresh nib for his pen, set about a suitable reply, which being accomplished, he buttoned close his spring overcoat, and sallied forth, umbrellaed and over-shoed, for a two-mile walk to the post office. It had not been easy to make

up his mind to write at all, but that done, the letter clamored for posting with so insistent a voice that there was no ignoring it.

Three days later came the reply, in the form of an invitation to spend a week end with Mrs. Hastings and her daughters, in the home town where they had a "little cottage." Another seven days elapsed, during which Trent read through the evenings, or chased the gossamer fantasies that circled around just without his grasp, fantasies which would slowly take unto themselves form and mental substance, until they crystallized into the "great idea," which should create his next fortune.

When the seven days were up, he again made a careful selection of note paper and indited an acceptance for the following Saturday and Sunday. He would be obliged, he wrote, to return early Monday morning, owing to "important business." This done, he once more trudged the two miles that lay between him and the post office.

As before, he was complimented by an immediate answer, filled with delicate allusions to a youthful past, and kindest anticipations. This note he read through impassively, then, gathering up all three missives, he encircled them with a rubber band and threw them carelessly into a lower drawer.

The following Saturday afternoon found Trent on the north bound train, speeding, after two decades and a half of forgetfulness, back to the town into which he had not set foot since his mother's death. He had formed no definite picture of its probable appearance, nor did he retain a very distinct remembrance of it as his boyhood's home, since his mind had never lingered about it with tenderness. But in spite of only apathetic interest in the place, as well as in the woman whom he was about to visit, he was conscious of a shock of bewildered surprise as he stepped upon the concrete platform that ran beneath the overhanging roof of a handsome station of gray stone, and gazed out over undulating lawns

and flower beds gay with early spring flowers.

He looked twice at the unmistakable sign painted above the door before he felt quite sure that the conductor had not made a mistake. And in that moment of troubled inquiry there flashed over him a picture of the old wooden building as it had looked forty years ago, the sheds for the horses, the ugly square hotel standing yonder with its gaudy sign advertising Lager Beer, and the muddy wagon tracks, through which disported ragged barefooted urchins, among them one Hike Trent, his pockets bulging with marbles and fishline and worms for bait.

Old memories began to stir, and a sense of personal loss settled over him, the first emotion he had known in years. But this renewal was cut temporarily short by the appearance of a dapper and obsequious individual in high boots, buff-colored bebuttoned coat and top hat, who inquired if he were Mr. Trent, and relieved him of his bag. However, forgotten emotions, once brought to the surface, do not sink back into the waters of Lethe easily, and they crowded more and more into consciousness as he bowled over the macadamized roads.

He had lost track of Ellen Montgomery since her marriage to the New Yorker. He was not one to cling to that which had caused him pain, and he had let her go. He knew that Hastings had achieved diplomatic success in Egypt—provided it were the same Hastings; he had never made an effort to ascertain whether he were the same, and two years ago he had heard, indirectly, that he was dead.

As they turned out into what used to be farming country, fine residences greeted his eyes on every side. The explanation was very evident: the place had become a fashionable summer resort, the kind where people come early in the season and stay late, that is, when they do not elect to remain the year around, as fully half of the rich residents of Haverton did elect.

At last the watcher gave up, with uneasy sense of disappointment, if it

can be called disappointment where nothing has been consciously expected, and allowed his gaze to spend itself within the carriage. It would be time enough to look out again when they reached the cottage—"little cottage," she had written. The thought afforded relief, though the exquisite interior of the brougham accorded not at all with so modest an expression.

Some half-realization of this lack of consistency prepared him for the winding avenue lined with willow and oak and maple into which they finally turned, and which led for a good fraction of a mile through a private park, past fountains and an Italian garden, to the imposing Gothic structure which the sweetheart of his boyhood called home.

She must be now fifty or thereabouts. He wondered idly whether or not there would be anything familiar in her appearance, anything to recall the sweet curly-headed girl of thirty or more years ago. But even as the image of that girl rose before him, with her laughing brown eyes and red-gold hair, he allowed it to slip back into the past, out of sight, and became his usual, assured, uncaring self.

He was about to visit a stranger, an elderly woman, the mother of grown daughters, the widow of a famous man. He knew now that he must have been "*the Hastings*," the most influential man in Egypt, of his day, the power behind the throne. Nothing short of such an explanation would serve.

His eyes swept the grounds, with their vistas of greenery and distant view of purpling mist-enveloped mountains, and then he was ushered within and took up his position in a small square reception room to await her coming. From where he sat, he commanded a reflection of the broad walnut staircase, by reason of a tall mirror in the hall, and he was aware that whoever descended the stairs would enjoy an equally complete reflection of himself. He imagined that his hostess might have deliberately planned this introductory meeting "through the looking glass" as a sort of mutual prep-

aration, and on the instant determined not to avail himself of it. He turned halfway round in his chair, away from the door, and took mental stock of the rich room, with the delighted appreciation of a connoisseur.

He had in his possession the companion Daubigny to the one on the wall, and a faint expression of satisfaction came into his face. The few ornaments scattered about were Egyptian things of silver and metal. Yes—of course, her husband had been *the Hastings*. And the rug—it was different from any that he had ever seen—Egyptian, too, perchance. He fell to examining it with a view to discover its origin, when a clear, finely modulated voice brought him to his feet. Mrs. Hastings stood in the doorway.

"Henry," she said, "can it really be you after all these years? Welcome to Thornycroft."

He bowed low over the soft fingers that rested lightly in his.

"The very same," he made reply; and then with elaborate gallantry: "You have not changed." He looked lingeringly over her face in the way which women like, and uttered this social untruth easily, searching meanwhile for some telltale mark of earlier days, but there was none. To him it was as though he were talking to one whom he had never known, yet there were traditions to live up to, and he meant to play his part.

"Fie, for shame!" laughed his hostess. "What pretty fiction! My old friends failed to recognize me when I first came home two years ago. But you—I should have known you." She looked at him with undisguised interest. "Your hair is white, and you have grown—"

"Stout," he interposed as she hesitated.

"And yet—" Again she hesitated.

"I am unchanged," he supplied.

"Yes, I know it. My friends call it a case of arrested development."

He spoke with a finality that closed the subject, and cast about as though to place for her a chair.

"Come," she said; "this I reserve for

formal visitors. Let us go into the library; but perhaps you prefer to go to your room first—yes, of course you do." She rang as she spoke, and a little dark-skinned page appeared almost simultaneously.

"Annek," she said in French, "take monsieur to his room. Afterward, you will find me in the library."

The boy's long slitted eyes gave answer, though he did not speak, and Trent followed him up the glassy stairs to the floor above.

When he had departed, Mrs. Hastings seated herself in a deeply padded chair of rose color, her back in the subdued light which percolated through the heavy lace curtains. Her gown of shimmering gray silk fell in graceful folds about her supple figure, and away from the small pointed satin slippers which rested on a footstool. From one wrist depended, by a slender chain, a fan of ivory and gold and gauze. She was very lovely and alluring and young; one would have guessed her nearer thirty-five than fifty, since the white hair, arranged elaborately and held in place by jeweled pins, could tell nothing in this day of premature fading.

Nevertheless she had changed, that she knew, and her aging had taken a peculiar form. She did not look old—she looked different. There was nothing about her to recall early memories, and there was about him—all but the world manner; that was new. The *naïveté* which usually accompanies a man of peculiar temperament to his grave, that wondering at life and its complexities, that readiness to love what is lovable without prying beneath the surface, was gone, had been replaced by—what? She could not tell. "By nothing," she was tempted to say.

When he returned, threading his way with quiet and indifferent assurance among the books and statuary and sumptuous furnishings, she looked up at him and asked gently:

"How does it seem to be back, Henry?"

"I do not realize that I am back," he made answer. "How can one go back?"

He looked at her with grave question-

ing and seated himself before her. "But," he added, smiling courteously, "it is most pleasant to be visiting you. And you have daughters, I think you said?"

The woman was conscious of a quick stab of pain. So he did not know, even that! When she learned that he had never married, she had supposed . . .

"Yes," she replied, "I have three girls, three beautiful girls. The two oldest are at home, but Ellen, the baby, is visiting a friend. She will return tomorrow, though, for she wants to see her mother's old—"

"Lover," supplied Trent immediately, without a trace of feeling in his voice. As he spoke he smiled and added: "That is more or less natural, I suppose, and I shall be charmed to meet her. Your daughters are beautiful, as a matter of course." Here his gaze caressed his hostess's face, though only for an instant.

A soft flush mantled the woman's cheeks.

"They are to me," she replied; "you will soon be able to judge for yourself. But what have you been doing all these years? And why have you never—"

Thus far the conversation had been punctuated on the woman's part by a series of sudden silences; not so her guest.

"Married?" He looked up in a detached way.

"Yes." Mrs. Hastings appeared surprisingly young as she implied the question, and yet her manner suggested that their age warranted any such trifling familiarity; surely it was a natural query. "I was amazed when I learned of it," she added, as though intent upon probing his indifference and discovering there perchance some live coal of sentiment.

"I am an inventor," he replied suavely. "I have not had time to think of marriage. And I have traveled everywhere, except perhaps in Egypt."

"Why not in Egypt?" The woman's heart fluttered ever so little; the indifference then was but a mask.

"I should have done so, without doubt, had I known that you were there."

At this, distrust flashed in her face.

"If you had known that I was there?" she repeated incredulously.

"Yes, indeed," he answered, "I should have, for I have been near it several times."

But the woman would not be persuaded out of her dream.

"My husband was ambassador to Egypt for several years previous to his death, you know, and before that he was consul."

"I knew that you married a Mr. Hastings," he replied, "and years after, upon my return from a sojourn in Japan, I read that a John Hastings had been made ambassador to Egypt, but I did not connect the two until a comparatively recent date. You enjoyed your stay there?"

At the politely put question, the mantle of youth fell from the woman and she became middle-aged. The sparkle died out of her eyes before this inexorable mentor, who rigorously drew the curtain before the past and turned his back upon it. She knew now what the strange change in his personality meant. He had atrophied, body and soul; he had frozen through and through; there had been no chance for development within the refrigerator of his soul.

She drifted at once into an animated rehearsal of her life within the realm of the Khedive, and of her husband's political triumphs there. She touched lightly upon the incidents connected with his death and her home-coming, as well as the changes that had taken place in the town, but not again did she beckon to him from the shadow of their early love. The door which had been closed under her girlish fingers refused now to open in response to her anguished woman strength. She had looked forward for months to this day of self-abandonment and forgiveness and restitution, ever since she knew that he had never married, but it had proven the day of her defeat.

It was late in the afternoon when Trent arrived, for he had purposely cut down the period of his stay, and the shadows had already begun to lengthen when, after an hour of unsatisfactory

and, upon her guest's part, courteously perfunct conversation, Mrs. Hastings suggested the relief of a walk in the garden. To this he responded with almost, though not quite, over-ready promptness; and as they passed out into the dimming quiet of the spring afternoon, she dispatched Annek to her daughters with word that they should join her in the rose terrace, now abloom with tulips, daffodils and flowering shrubs.

Once outside, Trent became more human, or so it seemed to his companion. He stopped to enjoy the panoramic effect of mountains and river and undulating grain land, visible from the hill upon which the house stood. His eyes followed with pleasure the whirling flight of some doves; he lingered to admire the white marble spring sunk amid the green moss at the foot of a clump of birches.

"It is very beautiful here," he said at last, looking out over the golden clouds which drifted lazily across the horizon—"very beautiful. You are most fortunate."

There was or was not, as the case might be, a world of meaning in the words, "most fortunate." Involuntarily Mrs. Hastings drew the light wrap more closely about her, and turned to look at him. In another moment she would have spoken words to have been regretted all the rest of her life. Her cheeks grew fuller, and a hint of the youthfulness that lingered about her when first they met returned. "That depends," she began, her voice unsteady—but at this moment two girls, one in pink, the other in palest green, with filmy scarfs thrown over their thin gowns, appeared through a break in the trees. They were the incarnation of joyous youth, smooth-skinned, pink-cheeked and smiling, with black hair and eyes. There was nothing either in their coloring or their features to suggest their mother.

"Like their father," thought Trent, as he advanced to greet them. His manner did not change perceptibly even under the shower of their smiles and welcome, but their mother shrank

back within the safeguard of her maternity. Somehow their presence recalled her, made her realize the absurdity of her position. This man had forgotten long since; to him, her tardy efforts at reparation would appear sublimely ridiculous. She had woven her elderly dream out of fabric as evanescent as a fairy's smile. Enough of it! She dropped behind the trio on pretense of examining a rose tree, and her guest passed on between her daughters.

It was Sunday evening. Trent sat alone in the great library, awaiting the descent of the family for dinner. He was glad to be alone, glad that his visit was almost over, and this in spite of the fact that it had been as pleasant as visits ever were to him. He found that as he grew older society attracted him less, the quiet of his own rooms more, and besides, the fantasies had during the last two days assumed more definite proportions. He was anxious for the feel of drawing board and pencil.

He sat with his head thrown back, his eyes fixed on the carved beams of the ceiling, though he saw nothing of them. Then a cloud of white, appearing against a dark hanging through which it had suddenly materialized, brought him to earth again, and he found himself looking straight into the extraordinarily large and lustrous eyes of a young girl dressed in white. Her hair gathered up all the light in the room, and blazed out in a golden glory round her delicate face, the glory with which Titian surrounds his women. It was parted and plaited and wound about her head in the fashion of her mother's girlhood. Her lips wore an expression half smiling, half surprised, and one hand grasped the curtain behind her.

For a moment Trent gazed unbelieving upon the apparition. The years shrank into an atom of space; his heart burst through the icy bonds which time and bitter reflection had placed upon it, and he started to his feet, the light of youth shining in his eyes.

"Ellen!" he cried, his hands outstretched.

"Yes," she answered, "I am Ellen. Mother has told me all about you. I am so glad that you can be with us." She went forward frankly, and laid her hand in his.

It was quite true; Mrs. Hastings had told her all about Trent, all, that is, save the one thing which concerned herself alone, and the girl was eager to make compensation, so far as compensation was possible.

"Come," she said, withdrawing the hand which he seemed to have forgotten—"come and let us sit over there on the window seat, where we can see the last of the sunset. Isn't this the loveliest old town!"

"Yes," he replied, his eyes fixed on her eager, sensitive face; "yes, it is a beautiful spot. You must be glad to get back to it again."

"I am." She looked confidently up at him. "Although of course I never saw it until two years ago. We went to Paris after we left Egypt. But mother used to describe it to me. I did so love to hear her tell about the times when she was a girl."

Mother! In spite of his other self, his intellectual self which sat apart, somber and accusing, and which knew that this was neither the time nor the place for the emotions which all but submerged his consciousness, since both were obsolete, that word, uttered by Ellen, brought before his mind not the image of the stately woman who had given him welcome the day before, but that of a little black-haired old-fashioned lady, who sat in a vine-covered porch and sewed, or discussed with him his approaching marriage to her daughter, laying down sage maxims the while for their future use. That was before the older Ellen's rich aunt had taken her abroad to cultivate her voice.

"You liked Paris?" he inquired.

"Oh, so much; it is charming. But not as I like this." She made a little motion toward the stretches of landscape visible through the window. "Somehow I feel as though I belonged here. It was like coming home."

"Yes." Trent nodded gently. "Of course you would not care to remain

there; you are not that kind—I always knew it. But the music—how did you succeed?"

Ellen dimpled—evidently her mother had told him everything.

"Splendidly," she replied. "I had the best teacher in the city. But I shall never do anything with my voice. It is enough to give pleasure to my friends. That is a mission in itself, mother says."

"She is quite right." Trent nodded emphatically.

"I wanted to be a nurse," Ellen went on, "for I love to take care of people, but they wouldn't let me do that. You see, I'm not clever like my sisters. I just embroider and sing and read a little"—she added this last tentatively—"and nurse a few poor sick country people. I'm dreadfully old-fashioned."

She looked up with shining eyes, but he did not seem to see her, although he was gazing straight into her face.

"Yes," he said in a strange voice, when she had finished, "you always were a capital nurse. Do you remember—" and then he stopped short in such evident consternation that Ellen began to talk again in a hurried, bewildered way.

"There's the dearest old blind woman just back of our place in a little cottage," she said. "She likes to have me sing to her."

"I don't wonder," he replied. "A contralto voice is the most beautiful in the world."

Ellen blushed with pleasure at her companion's affability, since her sisters had prepared her for something quite different. To her he seemed a very charming and lovable old gentleman, this one-time beau of her mother's.

Trent glanced at the tall clock in the corner. It still lacked some fifteen minutes of the dinner hour.

"Won't you sing to me now?" There was a note of pleading in his voice as he put the question.

"Yes, indeed, I will." Ellen rose at once, without false show of modesty, and went to the piano. "Do you know," she said, with a pretty arch

look, "I feel as though we had met before. You are not at all strange to me. It isn't possible, is it—perhaps when I was a very little girl?"

Trent straightened, and youth surged over him more insistently. The light in his eyes made them luminous, but he answered evenly: "No, my dear, we have never met before, and yet I feel in very much the same way. It often happens so." It was the brooding self, which knew, that now spoke for the first time.

"Does it?" said Ellen, and then: "What shall I sing?"

"What pleases you best," he replied, the light in his face grown dim with realization of the present.

Ellen's fingers ran lingeringly up and down the keyboard for a moment or so, stopping here and there to accentuate some mellow bell-like note, and then she began, tenderly, in a low, vibrant contralto, Ben Jonson's immortal song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes and I will pledge with mine."

A shock passed through her listener, as he gazed down at her, and tense yearning grew in his fate.

It was as Ellen sang the closing words that Mrs. Hastings came softly to the door and stood looking at the rapt pair, at the sweet unconscious girl who sang on with lowered lids, changing from the old love song into a modern lullaby, and at the man, down whose cheeks the tears were streaming all unheeded.

The song was her own, the song that she had sung to him when last he had called upon her. He had come that night to say good-bye before she sailed for Paris, and to bring her the little betrothal ring of blue forget-me-nots. It was in Paris that she had met John Hastings. She turned and slipped unseen out upon the balcony which opened from the hall. There she leaned against the trellis for support.

There was an indefinable difference in Trent as he took his place at the table that night, a difference observable to everyone except Ellen, who had not known him otherwise, although it was only the woman presiding with queenly

assurance at the head of the table who understood.

It was this sense of understanding that had restored to her the self-respect which had so suddenly deserted her the day before.

She had not, then, been mistaken.

It was toward the end of the meal that she turned to him with a question which was at the same time a request.

"Must you really leave us so soon, Henry?" Her voice was clear and resonant once more. "You know how glad we should be to have you spend several days with us, as many days or as many weeks as you can spare."

"It is very good of you," Trent answered, looking at her with his former impersonal courtesy—"very kind; but I am afraid that I must go—"

"Won't you please stay?" It was

Ellen's voice. "If you only will, I'll take you to see the blind woman tomorrow afternoon. I'd love to."

"And if I should change my mind, will you sing to me?" he asked, his face softening, his eyes growing luminous again.

"Of course I will," she replied, with the gaiety of a child; and then triumphantly: "Mother, he will stay."

But Mrs. Hastings shivered, and the color died out of her cheeks. She experienced a vague jealousy, not of Ellen but of that other girl who peered elfishly at her from out the land of her lost happiness, the land to which there was no returning. It was in her semblance that Ellen had been fashioned.

"Yes," replied Trent, looking not at his hostess but at her daughter, "I will stay."



VAGABONDAGE

By Katherine Williams Sinclair

WHAT care I for the world's great woe—
So the wind in the treetops whisper low,
So the river wakens, murmurs and stirs,
And the quivering green of the valley blurs
At the kiss of a vagrant breeze.

Why should I weave me a crown of thorns—
When the great world where the soul belongs
Holds forth arms laden with joys untold,
For stumbling humans, with thoughts of gold
And the love of a minstrel tune.

Why memory-linger with darkened hours—
While a stream runs soft through the nodding flowers,
When every banner of youth's unfurled,
And Love, well-wisher o' the world,
Attuned to a lilting rhyme.

THE OTHER BRIDEGROOM

By Albert M. Treynor

ANGUS BLAKE was still in bed when I went to offer marriage to his daughter. I desired to cable my solicitors that they might begin the repairs on Aunt Margaret's castle, where I had planned that Lady Alice and I should reside the next pheasant season. So, why the deuce not have the thing over at once?

"You say you're giving my daughter a chance to marry you?" asked the elderly Mr. Blake, peering at me over the blankets.

He looked so friendly—my word!—I was near giving him my hand. But I've a head for business, and my solicitors urged me explicitly not to let my heart run away with my acumen. So I answered cautiously:

"Yes. I've heard of you and your enormous affairs, even in London. I've heard, too, of Miss Alice, your daughter, who is reported to be quite refined and pretty. As my wife I've no doubt but that she'll be accepted at home. I came all the way to America to form this alliance with your family. I'm a beastly enterprising fellow."

"I'm still in my nighty," said he. "But if you'll turn your back a moment, I'll get up and talk it over with you."

I appreciated his modesty, though I'd not expected it from him. So I lighted a cigarette and about-faced as I've seen the Tommies do in the army.

"I assure you," said I, "I'll not look."

"Thanks," he replied. "I'll not be long. Will you kindly hold that pose?"

I heard him draw on one of his boots.

"Now," he observed, "we can talk business."

My word! Before I knew what he was about he bounded from the bed and gave me a frightful kick. My eyeglass flew utterly from my eye and smashed against the wall, and the light from my cigarette came perilously near firing my mustaches.

Mr. Blake was an aged man with hoary whiskers, but what an extraordinary athlete he was—oh, ripping! He opened the door and booted me into the hallway. I scooted to the lift, and he followed all the way, hopping on one bare foot like a bally ballet dancer. At every second skip he let me have another one, and after each boot he had to go a bit faster to keep pace with me.

"You can repair your depleted family fortunes with those!" he shouted as the lift came down. The boy opened the door and I tumbled into the car.

"You're a beastly old thing!" I cried spiritedly as the lift was descending. "You're half nude! Draw on your clothes, you shocking creature!"

My excellent friend, Mr. Richard Murphy, who had sent me to visit Mr. Blake in his bedchamber, was awaiting my return in the club reception room. Mr. Murphy was an American, and from him I had learned that Mr. Blake was an expeditious man and liked to do things swiftly. That was one reason I had not held off until after breakfast.

"How much of a settlement did he give you?" asked Mr. Murphy when I limped over to his chair. "I hope you held out for a million, old chap!"

"Quite less than that," I replied, but not facetiously. I ached in many places, and it was quite difficult for me to stand, not to speak of assuming any

other posture. I was in a furious temper—oh, I was astoundingly angry!

"Mr. Blake was most hostile," I said. "My eye! How he booted me!"

"Really!" exclaimed Mr. Murphy. "Now why do you suppose he did that?"

"How can I say?" I retorted. "I'm no blasted mind reader, you know."

My friend regarded me a minute. Then he struck the arm of his chair with his hand.

"I have it!" he cried. "Old man Blake doesn't want you to marry his daughter."

"I say, old fellow, you must be correct," I agreed. "But he didn't tell me that."

"But I'll wager you he doesn't," he insisted. "That's old man Blake's way of explaining himself. That man's a deep one."

"But if he doesn't want me to marry her, how the deuce am I to rehabilitate Aunt Margaret's castle?" I demanded. "The roof leaks and the drains won't drain."

"That's a stumper now, isn't it?" he mused. "But I tell you what you do, Algy, old scout." He called me Algy, though I'd only met him the day before. "Why not elope with Miss Alice?"

"Fly with her?" I asked audaciously.

"That's the ticket," he said. "I'll help you because you're a good fellow."

"But I haven't made her acquaintance as yet," I protested.

"That's all right. I'll present you," Mr. Murphy offered. "I know her well. In fact, I was going to marry her myself. But her father found out about it and sent her to the country home of Mrs. Wycliffe, her aunt. The old lady hired a half-dozen private detectives to keep me from running away with Alice. They do sentry duty beneath her window at night. And the aunt watches her in the daytime. It's quite impossible to get her away from the house. I gave up the race some time ago."

"Then, blame it all, how am I going to skip with her?" I objected.

"You've the lineage for it, old top," he said. "I'm just an American lawyer, with a fair income but no family. The aunt doesn't approve of me. But you—my dear Algy—when you show her your full name, she'll help you elope. She's a lunatic for pedigrees."

"Really," said I cordially, "you're a sagacious fellow. I shall coöperate with the aunt. What an extraordinarily feasible idea!"

"The aunt's place is about an hour's motor ride from here," he informed me. "I'll telephone Alice that you're going to visit her. You can go out there this afternoon with a letter of introduction from me. It isn't exactly regular, but I don't dare set foot in her aunt's home myself. I'll have my man drive you out in the car alone."

Miss Alice was all that I had anticipated. I found her in her aunt's garden. She was a slim girl with enormous eyes and a sort of yellowish gold hair. Her color was first rate. I dare say she was beautiful. Her aunt's estate was ripping. It certainly was worth two hundred thousand pounds. Miss Alice expected to inherit it some day. I believed we could easily arrange to sell it through my London agents when the poor old aunt died. The aunt was a thin old lady in a black lace gown. I was presented to her before tea. She looked tubercular. I didn't believe she could last long. Mr. Blake was rich, too, but he seemed terrifically healthy.

Miss Alice accepted my letter, but didn't pause to read it. She had me come to a tea table under a tree in the garden.

"Mr. Murphy telephoned me all about you, Sir Algernon," she said. "He didn't tell me about the mustache, though. I think it's growing very well."

"You are very kind," I replied as I fluffed the ends. I felt that she was impressed. We were getting on like tops together.

I lighted a cigarette, and began looking about me. We were seated near a marble fountain. Just beyond there was a big lawn, and a golf course. The house was made of stone and must

have cost a great deal. Still, I remembered, it was sometimes hard to sell large estates. My solicitors once informed me it is often better to rent.

Our chat was interrupted by Miss Alice's aunt, who came into the garden seeking her.

"This is Sir Algernon Bartholemue Pontmorency Gale," said Miss Alice, as she offered the old woman a seat by the tea table.

The aunt and I got to be awful croonies.

"Pour Sir Algernon some tea, Alice," she said. She got herself a cup and came dreadfully close, balancing the scalding stuff just above my knee. Her old hand was deuced unsteady. I was in a frightful sweat.

"We feel honored by your visit," the old woman told me. "How did you happen to come to the United States? An affair of the heart? Oh, you wretch!"

"Really," I said, "that is comic. I was going to speak of that myself. It's dreadfully comic that you should have said it first." How I laughed then! I got nearly hysterical.

When I finally grew composed I turned to Miss Alice and said:

"Your father, you know, objects to our marrying. I wasn't planning to do anything desperate when I left home, but, deuce take it, I'll elope with you if you say the word. I don't care what my friends think—I'm ready to elope."

The aunt hopped up from her chair.

"Oh, Sir Algy, we accept!" she cried. And the next instant her cup of tea went over into my lap.

"Oh, I say—oh, dammit!" I blurted out. "I wasn't proposing to the whole family, you know! You've blistered my leg! It's extremely careless of you, by Jove!"

I bounded over to the fountain and began splashing myself. I was as wet as a mermaid before I had finished, and my flannels were jolly well ruined.

The old aunt pegged it after me, and tried to take my hand. She begged my pardon twenty times in a minute, and almost pushed me into the fountain before I could shove her away.

Miss Alice was fearfully mortified. There were actual tears in her eyes, and she had nearly swallowed her handkerchief. My rage softened at the sight of her.

"Oh, I say now, don't be so cut up," I implored her generously, and tried to pat her. Then I gave her the glance I had learned has a terrific effect on women. She turned her head away and blushed in a quite girlish fashion. She was struggling with her emotion, you know.

"I'm sorry about the accident," she finally said, "and I'm willing to run away with you if you can persuade aunt to help us."

The aunt was really eager to help.

"I'll do everything I can for you," she readily promised. "Why not have the ceremony this afternoon? It's only six miles to the parsonage at High Bridge. It will be so exciting. Give me your trousers, Sir Algernon. I'll have a maid press them."

"I—er—really—oh, come now!" I protested.

"You'll have to go to bed, or else I'll have the gardener lend you a pair," she interrupted. "You can pass your own out through the transom. Hurry into the house now. It's growing late."

"I must telephone first," declared Miss Alice. And she went scampering like a pheasant through the garden.

An hour and a half later, Miss Alice, her aunt and I set out in an enormous car for the parson's house. Miss Alice sat in front with the chauffeur and the aunt and I occupied the tonneau.

It was a frightfully fast drive. The chauffeur cut out over the turnpike in a most reckless manner. The sun was just beginning to set, and I felt it would be dark before the blasted ceremony was finally performed. But I should have liked to travel a bit more slowly.

The arrangements had been rotten. No one had thought to serve supper before we started, and I was as hungry as anything. The dust made one shockingly thirsty, too, before we had gone a mile. I was jiggled nearly to a jelly over the rough road, and it got actually more dreadful as we proceeded.

"I say," I finally cried to the driver, "can't you let her down a bit, my man? I'm getting the vertigo, by Jove!"

We were skipping down a long slope, and I could see there was a sudden turn at the bottom.

"I got you," the chauffeur answered, and he set the brakes. We slowed down suddenly and slid around the turn into an avenue of trees, and—

My eye! There was a great car waiting in the road just ahead of us. Two men were standing in the tonneau looking back. Mr. Richard Murphy! Mr. Angus Blake! My word!

I began climbing out the back of the car.

"Wait! Stop!" I heard Mr. Blake shout.

Our chauffeur brought the car to a sudden halt, and I spilled into the road. In less than an instant I was on my feet and dashed away.

I could hear Mr. Blake coming up the road after me, so I turned to the left and crawled beneath a barbed fence. Jumping up, I plunged headlong into a thicket, and I could hear the crashing of the bushes as the old man pursued me.

"Take him off!" I cried. "I say, you beggar, don't you dare touch me!"

Mr. Blake was roaring like an infuriated animal as he continued in my rear.

I doubled in my course like a bally rabbit, and climbed the fence into the road again, leaving a portion of my trousers.

"Let me at him!" Mr. Blake called as he went over the fence in a single leap. "Oh, let me boot him!"

"Help!" I shrieked. "Help!"

A big tree by the pike seemed my only means of escape. I grasped the trunk, and began working my way into the branches above. I was an agile Johnny, and mounted with the fleetness of a sailor. But the old man reached me before I could draw my foot out of peril.

"I'll strike you if you come near me!" I cried menacingly. He seized me by the boot and began pulling for dear life.

"Come down, you nincompoop!" he commanded ferociously. I felt myself

slipping, when suddenly there came a cry of alarm from the road.

"Angus! Quick! They're running away!" It was the aunt calling.

Just as I fell from the tree I heard the whirl of a starting automobile. Mr. Murphy and Miss Alice were in Mr. Blake's car driving down the road toward High Bridge in a swirl of dust.

"Oh, the scoundrel! The damned double-crosser!" shouted Mr. Blake.

He got me by the collar and dragged me to Mrs. Wycliffe's car.

"I'll attend to you later," he said.

"In you go!" And he picked me up and actually hurled me into the tonneau with the aunt. Then he climbed up with the driver. "After them!" he commanded, and away we went in pursuit.

Our speed was tremendous. We bounded along the road like a rubber ball. I was really unable to stay on the seat. Sometimes I was sitting on Mrs. Wycliffe's lap and sometimes she was sitting on mine. It was a fearful situation. I clutched the side of the car for my life, while we flew along the pike with a roar that quite deafened me.

At last we turned into a drive that led to a cottage near the road.

I glanced up just as the front door was opened, and Miss Alice and Mr. Murphy came out upon the stoop. They came down toward the car as Mr. Blake and I jumped to the ground. Miss Alice smiled.

"You must congratulate us, father," she said. "We've just been married."

"Oh, blame it all," I cried, "you've made a ghastly mistake! You've married the wrong fellow, by Jove!"

"Father, have I?" I heard her whisper. "The man who executed this—is he the wrong one for Angus Blake's daughter?" She went to his side and threw her arms over his shoulders.

"Oh, dammit!" said Mr. Blake. Then his face got red again.

Really, I didn't wait. I flew around behind the parson's barn and stopped there until I heard the automobiles leaving.

My word! It was well I hadn't married into that family. It was a lucky squeak—what?

THE CULPRIT*

By Percival L. Weil

CHARACTERS

PHILIP DURYEA (*slightly over forty, and inclined to be rather loud*)

FREDERICK CARYL (*thirty-four, and a bit of an ass*)

MADELEINE CARYL (*pretty, quiet, well balanced, and with a complete ascendancy over her husband*)

HUGH SAVARY (*about thirty-five. He wears a Tuxedo suit which has seen better days. The other men are in regulation evening dress.*)

PLACE: A city residence.

TIME: The present.

SCENE—A large, well furnished room in DURYEA's house. To the left are French windows and a sideboard, on which bottles containing liquors are visible. At the rear is a doorway, with hangings which are drawn aside to give the audience a view of a hall closed at the end by the door of DURYEA's bedroom. The hall is intersected by another near the front doorway. Near the angle of the rear and right hand walls is a small safe. The handle is turned in such a way that it is apparent that the safe is unlocked. To the right is a folding door leading into another room, and a large sofa. A round card table stands in the center of the room.

As the curtain rises a game of auction bridge is drawing to its close. DURYEA is the big winner—the tilt of his cigar shows it. SAVARY is the chief loser; he plays his cards nervously. CARYL is dummy, and his wife is playing his hand.

MRS. CARYL

Now the ace, please.

(CARYL plays the ace. DURYEA and the others follow, CARYL gathering the trick for dummy.)

MRS. CARYL

Now a club; wait—the seven.

(CARYL plays the seven of clubs; DURYEA, after a pause, plays the five; MRS. CARYL discards a heart; SAVARY also discards a heart.)

DURYEA (as SAVARY plays)

Damnation—oh, I beg your pardon,

Mrs. Caryl. But where's the Jack—the Jack of clubs?

(He angrily throws his remaining card, the ten of clubs, onto the table, as dummy leads the Queen of clubs and takes the last trick.)

SAVARY

I discarded the Jack five tricks ago.

MRS. CARYL (as CARYL is beginning to count)

Freddy, a cigarette.

(CARYL drops his counting, and reaches for his cigarette case. SAVARY offers his. After a pause MRS. CARYL takes a cigarette)

* Copyright, 1912, by the author. All rights reserved.

February, 1913—9

THE SMART SET

from SAVARY, and lights it at a match which DURYEA offers. CARYL puts away his case and resumes the count.)

CARYL

Three odd, and thirty by honors. Let me see—there were two aces in my hand, and one in yours.

MRS. CARYL

Yes, I had the ace of clubs.

DURYEA

I wonder how I managed to forget that Jack? I had him spotted for the high card, and—

SAVARY

No post mortems! No post mortems!

DURYEA (*stopping suddenly, looking at SAVARY and smiling*)

Oh, very well. Loser's wishes should be taken into consideration. Er—have a cigar?

SAVARY (*who has risen, and is mixing himself another drink*)

No. No, thanks.

MRS. CARYL (*glancing at her watch*)

Do you know what time it is, Freddy? It's half past eleven.

CARYL

No—really? I had no idea it was as late as that. (*Rising.*) We must be going.

DURYEA (*pushing his chair back, with a sigh*)

Well, if you must, you must. But hold on a minute; er—what's the score?

(SAVARY *drinks his highball and walks toward the rear with his hands clasped behind his back. He stops before the safe.*)

DURYEA (*sotto voce, indicating SAVARY*)
Hard hit, eh?

CARYL (*finishing his reckoning with DURYEA looking over his shoulder*)

Madeleine, you have lost two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

MRS. CARYL

And how much did you win?

CARYL

Two hundred.

MRS. CARYL

So we've lost only twenty-five dollars between us. Come, that's not half bad.

(SAVARY, *at the rear, has faced about, and is listening nervously.*)

DURYEA (*pompously*)

Now, Mr. Caryl, how much did I win?

CARYL

You are just sixteen hundred dollars ahead.

DURYEA

You hear that, Mrs. Caryl? Sixteen hundred dollars! How about *that*? That's not half bad, eh?

MRS. CARYL

You are to be congratulated on your—your luck.

DURYEA

Skill, madam, skill!

MRS. CARYL

Skill.

DURYEA

Er—thanks. Now, Savary.

CARYL

Mr. Savary loses fifteen seventy-five.

SAVARY

What!

DURYEA

Fifteen hundred and seventy-five dollars, he said.

CARYL (*counting out bills from a wallet*)
Twenty-five dollars. Our balance, Mr. Duryea.

DURYEA

Thanks. Now—er—

(SAVARY *approaches the table, pulls out a wallet and tosses all the bills it contains to DURYEA without counting them.*)

DURYEY (*thumbing them deliberately*)
Three hundred and twenty-eight dollars. You still owe me twelve fifty-seven.

CARYL (*after a pause*)
Forty-seven.

DURYEY
Er—yes. Twelve forty-seven.

SAVARY (*quietly*)
Mr. Duryea—I—I can't pay.

DURYEY
What! You can't pay? Oh, of course, you haven't the cash with you. I cleaned you out, by Jove! I cleaned you out! I'll take your cheque.

SAVARY
Mr. Duryea, you don't understand me. I can't pay you, even by cheque. My cheque isn't good for that much. I haven't five hundred dollars more in the world.

DURYEY (*rising*)
Then what the hell do you mean—

CARYL (*also rising*)
Sh-h! Mrs. Caryl is present, if you please.

DURYEY
What difference does that make? What right's this fellow got to play if he can't settle up what he owes? That's what I want to know. He'd 'a' taken my money fast enough if he'd won. Now he's lost, and he's got to pay. He's got to pay, d'ye understand that?

CARYL
Sh-h! Sh-h!

DURYEY
Oh, don't try any o' that on me. It won't work, I tell you. It won't work. I took him for a gentleman—not a welcher!

SAVARY
That's just about enough! By God, I won't hear any more from you!

DURYEY
Ho-ho! You won't hear any more from me? Well, if that isn't rich! Who in thunder are you, anyhow? A beggar! That's what you are! A beggar!

MRS. CARYL (*interposing between the men*)
Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Mr. Duryea, sit down. Mr. Savary, you forget yourself. (*Turning to DURYEA*) When you invited my husband and myself to come here tonight, you asked us to bring someone to make a fourth. Mr. Savary is here as my guest. I am responsible for him, and I accept the responsibility. If he is unable to pay, we—

CARYL
Madeleine!

MRS. CARYL
There's nothing else to do, Freddy! It's the proper thing. Now, Mr. Duryea, Mr. Savary still owes you—

DURYEY
Twelve forty-seven.

MRS. CARYL
Twelve hundred and forty-seven dollars. You shall have it.

DURYEY
Will I?

CARYL
But, Madeleine, I'm not a rich man. I can't afford this sort of thing. Look here, Savary, can't you pay *anything*?

MRS. CARYL
Freddy! Be quiet! Mr. Duryea, we will pay you what Mr.—

DURYEY
But your husband just said he couldn't.

CARYL
I didn't say I couldn't. I meant it would be a strain.

MRS. CARYL
Yes, that's what he meant.

THE SMART SET

DURYEA (eagerly)

Cash?

CARYL

No.

DURYEA

Then you'll give me your note?

CARYL (after a pause)

Yes.

DURYEA

And security?

CARYL (with a violent start)

What do you want security for?

DURYEA

Now, now, don't excite yourself. You can give me satisfactory security, can't you? You know what I mean.

CARYL

Not that! Not that!

DURYEA (with a smile)

Oh, we'll see. (Going toward the rear door) I've got blank notes in my room. Wait a minute and I'll fill one out.

MRS. CARYL

Do so.

(DURYEA leaves the room, walks through the short hall, and opens the door to his bedroom, leaving it open. He switches on a light which shines directly into the eyes of the audience, and then disappears from sight.)

CARYL (turning to SAVARY)

You're a nice specimen, you are!

SAVARY

Mr. Caryl, I will explain it all. It will be all right.

CARYL

Yes? Wish I were sure of it.

MRS. CARYL

Freddy, I want to talk to Mr. Savary. (She goes to the sideboard, where SAVARY joins her. Their conversation is inaudible.)

CARYL, after standing still an instant, shakes his head savagely and walks to the

safe. He is surprised to find that it is unlocked. He bends over, turns the handle and opens the door. The lower part of the safe is taken up with drawers; the upper part is divided into compartments, in one of which a large buff envelope is conspicuous. CARYL, after a covert look at his wife and at SAVARY, who do not seem to observe, closes the door again.)

CARYL

He's left his safe open!

MRS. CARYL (absorbed in conversation with SAVARY)

What did you say, Freddy?

CARYL

He hasn't locked up the safe. Fancy that!

MRS. CARYL (paying no attention)
All right, Freddy.

DURYEA (suddenly appearing at the center door, and noticing CARYL at the safe)

Mr. Caryl! I am waiting for you.

CARYL (with a violent start)

All right, Duryea—be with you right away. Madeleine! Madeleine!

MRS. CARYL

Yes, Freddy.

CARYL

You had better put on your things.

DURYEA

Yes, I forgot. This way, Mrs. Caryl. (He leads the way into the room to the right, and MRS. CARYL follows him.)

SAVARY

Mr. Caryl—

CARYL (cutting him short)

Sir, the less I hear from you, the better. (He turns his back.)

SAVARY

Very well, sir. I—I think I will get my hat.

(He goes out through the right hand door. Again CARYL begins to inspect the safe, and DURYEA reenters while he is doing so.)

DURYEA

Don't like to disturb you, but—

CARYL

Where's the note? I'm ready.

(They go out through the center door, DURYEA switching off the lights as he leaves the room. The stage is dark, except for a ray of light coming from DURYEA's bedroom, and what little illumination filters through the tapestries to the right. Voices are heard in the distance, then silence.)

Presently the tapestries at the library door move, and a figure is seen to glide into the room. The figure proceeds directly to the safe and throws it open. Then the door at the end of the hall slams loudly, cutting off nearly all the light.)

DURYEA (from the darkness)

Who's at the safe?

(There is the sound of moving bodies.)

DURYEA (quickly)

Caryl!

CARYL (appearing at the library door)

Yes.

DURYEA

Mrs. Caryl!

MRS. CARYL'S VOICE (next to DURYEA)

Yes.

DURYEA

Right here, eh?

MRS. CARYL

Yes.

DURYEA

Caryl!

CARYL

Yes.

DURYEA

Nobody's passed you?

CARYL

No.

DURYEA

See that nobody gets by. Now, Savary! (No answer.) Savary! (Again no answer. A pause.) I'm going to turn on the lights!

(He does so. The safe is open, and the buff envelope is gone. DURYEA is at the center door, with his hand on the switch. At his side is MRS. CARYL, wearing a cloak, and with a wrap over her head, both of a dark color. CARYL is at the right hand door, dressed as before, without an overcoat. Reclining on the sofa, watching them intently, with hands clasped behind his head, is SAVARY.)

DURYEA

Ah! (He advances into the room, goes to the safe at once, examines it quickly and nods.) I am sorry, Mrs. Caryl and gentlemen, but I shall have to ask you to remain a little while. Won't you sit down?

(CARYL and MADELEINE seat themselves. CARYL's eyes never leave SAVARY; MRS. CARYL watches DURYEA.)

DURYEA

I see no reasons for making any bones about it. (Watching them all very carefully) During the past five minutes that safe has been robbed!

(They all start.)

CARYL

What!

MRS. CARYL

You don't mean it!

(SAVARY whistles)

DURYEA

It was unlocked when I left the room. In the upper compartment was a buff envelope containing twenty-five hundred dollars in hundred-dollar bills. It is gone. Someone has opened the safe and taken it. (He pauses.) Mr. Savary—I will trouble you for an explanation.

THE SMART SET

SAVARY (*sitting up slowly and lighting a cigarette*)
Why do you ask me?

DURYEA

Why do I ask you? Oh, there's no particular reason. I have to begin with someone.

(SAVARY *walks slowly to the safe, examines it, rubs his fingers along the top and looks at the tips of his fingers.*)

DURYEA

Well, sir, I am waiting. Have you nothing to say?

SAVARY (*turning deliberately, and knocking the ash from his cigarette*)

I think I should mention that Mr. Caryl noticed that the safe was open while you were out of the room.

CARYL (*springing to his feet*)

You damnable cad! And after I squared for what you lost!

SAVARY (*imperturbably*)

In fact, Mr. Caryl opened the safe, and shut it again.

DURYEA

Is this true, Caryl?

CARYL

Yes. But I didn't take anything. I swear I didn't! Don't believe what that fellow says!

DURYEA

But you admit that you opened the safe.

CARYL

Search me.

DURYEA (*slowly*)

That's not a bad idea. Suppose you turn out your pockets.

CARYL (*approaching the center table, and producing his belongings, one by one*)

Here—my watch—my gloves—my wallet — handkerchiefs — my keys —

change — pencil — memorandum book. (*By this time he has turned his pockets inside out.*) Well, do any of these things resemble your money?

DURYEA

Mr. Savary, would you mind examining Mr. Caryl's clothing?

SAVARY (*approaching briskly*)

Charmed, I'm sure.

(*He feels over CARYL carefully.*)

SAVARY

It wouldn't be possible for me to miss the envelope?

DURYEA

No. It's too large.

SAVARY

Well, it isn't on him.

CARYL (*putting his things back*)

I hope you're satisfied. (*Turning to SAVARY*) Now it's your turn.

SAVARY

Mr. Duryea will do me the favor? (*DURYEA helps search him. A heavy revolver is taken from his hip pocket.*)

CARYL

What's that? A nice thing for a gentleman to carry, eh?

SAVARY (*to DURYEA, disregarding CARYL*)

You have found nothing, have you?

DURYEA

No.

SAVARY (*replacing his belongings. He picks up the revolver and twirls the cylinder*)

Pretty little toy, isn't it?

CARYL (*turning away with disgust*)

Ugh!

DURYEY (drawing himself up grandly)
Now I suppose you ought to search me.

MRS. CARYL
Oh, I really don't think it would help.

SAVARY
I agree with you.

CARYL
But we'll search you anyway.
(DURYEY is searched, with no result.)

MRS. CARYL
I am sorry, gentlemen, but as for myself—

SAVARY
No—no!

CARYL
Certainly not.

DURYEY
What?

MRS. CARYL
You will have to take my word for it.
I must decline to be searched.

DURYEY
Still, everybody else has turned out his pockets, and—

CARYL
Don't be an ass, Duryey.

MRS. CARYL
Gentlemen, I have no pockets.

DURYEY (looking intently at her low cut gown)

But—but there are many other places of concealment.

SAVARY
Tut-tut! Be reasonable. Mrs. Caryl is not a thief.

DURYEY
You can't be sure.

CARYL
I don't want you to mention my wife's name.

CARYL (to DURYEY)
What did you say? (He doubles his fists.)

MRS. CARYL
Freddy! Behave!
(There is a pause. CARYL and DURYEY relax slowly.)

SAVARY
Here! Here! Not so much melodrama. Suppose we sit down. (They do so.) We will work this out quietly. When Mr. Caryl opened the safe, I saw the envelope. It was there ten minutes ago. It is not there now.

DURYEY
Exactly.

SAVARY
The envelope couldn't have vanished of its own accord. Mr. Duryey has been robbed. The robber is certainly seated at this table. Now, which one is it? That's the question.

CARYL
Yes, that's the question. Only that.

DURYEY (after a pause)
Caryl, I'm going to be honest with you—

SAVARY
Hear! Hear!

DURYEY (turning on him furiously)
What?

CARYL
Don't pay any attention to him. What were you going to say?

DURYEY (to SAVARY)
All right; it'll be your turn later. (To CARYL) Now, Caryl, you knew the safe was open. You—

CARYL
So did we all. So did Savary.

DURYEY
Don't get excited. I'm not accusing anybody—as yet. I'm simply going over the facts. Er—you knew the safe

THE SMART SET

was open. Moreover, you opened and closed it while I was out of the room. Is that correct?

CARYL

I suppose so.

DURYEA

You could have taken the envelope at that time.

CARYL

But I didn't! I say I didn't!

DURYEA

Not so fast. Mr. Savary!

SAVARY

At your service.

DURYEA

Will you swear that Caryl didn't take the envelope when you saw him open the safe?

SAVARY

When I saw him open the safe? No, decidedly no.

CARYL

No? No, what?

SAVARY

I won't swear you didn't take it.

CARYL

You rotter! You unutterable—

DURYEA

Exactly. Again, Caryl left my bedroom before I did—to put on his coat, he said. Where is it?

MRS. CARYL

Where is what?

DURYEA

His overcoat.

CARYL

I—I—

DURYEA

At any rate, you didn't put it on, did you? You could just as easily have

come in here while the room was dark. In fact, you didn't get your coat, and I found you at that door (*Pointing*) when I turned on the lights. You see, it's quite possible that you're the man.

MRS. CARYL (*nodding*)

Yes.

CARYL (*to* MRS. CARYL)

Sh-h, Madeleine! (*To* DURYEA) Is that all the evidence you have against me?

DURYEA

Mr. Caryl, that is *not* all. It is all I choose to speak of just now.

CARYL

Well, what's the rest? (*He stops abruptly.*)

DURYEA (*sternly*)

You will hear it soon enough, if you force me. Take your time. Now, Mrs. Caryl.

MRS. CARYL

Yes, sir.

DURYEA

No offense if I state the evidence against you?

MRS. CARYL

None at all.

DURYEA

All right. Now, *you* had *your* opportunity. You left the room to put on your cloak. You could have done so, and you would have had time to abstract the envelope.

MRS. CARYL

Ample time, yes.

DURYEA

You could have come in here—

MRS. CARYL

—opened the safe and helped myself, without anyone being the wiser.

DURYEA

Exactly.

MRS. CARYL

Besides which, I knew the safe was not locked.

DURYEA

Also that. And with the exception of yourself, all of us have submitted to a search.

MRS. CARYL

Perfectly true. I would gratify your curiosity if I could.

CARYL

Madeleine!

MRS. CARYL

But I can't.

DURYEA

So we'll have to take your word for it.

MRS. CARYL

Precisely.

DURYEA

That sums up the case against you. As for Savary, of all the persons here, he had most reason to benefit by the robbery.

SAVARY

Because I am a poor man, eh? Or words to that effect?

DURYEA (*savagely*)

Because you lost your last dollar at whist, that's why! And because a man who will lose money he hasn't got will do worse things. You were on the sofa when I turned on the lights. How long had you been there?

SAVARY

Only a few seconds.

DURYEA

How do I know that's true?

SAVARY

You don't.

DURYEA

At any rate, *you* had *your* opportunity.

SAVARY

Yes, a splendid opportunity.

MRS. CARYL

The evidence against each one of us seems to be equally strong.

DURYEA

So far.

MRS. CARYL

And it's hit or miss. Any one of us might have done it.

DURYEA

So far! Now, there is one last point. There was nothing about the envelope to indicate that it contained money. It contained twenty-five hundred dollars. I knew that. One other person besides myself knew that. (*He pauses.*) Mrs. Caryl, it was not you. Savary, it was not you. Caryl, *you* knew— Do you follow me?

MRS. CARYL and SAVARY

Yes.

DURYEA

Savary would not have run the risk of stealing an envelope which might have contained rubbish.

SAVARY (*with a bow*)

You flatter me. But perhaps I did take the risk.

DURYEA

Still, the chances are against it. All of the evidence points one way. Caryl, I will trouble you for twenty-five hundred dollars.

CARYL

But I didn't take your filthy money.

DURYEA

Did I say you did? I don't accuse you—mark that, I don't accuse you. All I say is that you, and only you, knew that it was there.

MRS. CARYL (*to CARYL*)

How did you know?

THE SMART SET

DURYEA

Yes, tell your wife how you knew.

CARYL

I admit I knew. How I knew doesn't matter.

SAVARY

Doesn't matter? You can't be sure. Let us hear about it.

MRS. CARYL

Yes, tell me about it.

DURYEA (*tauntingly*)We're waiting, Caryl. How did you know? Do you want *me* to tell? You haven't forgotten that I *can* tell.CARYL (*after a pause*)

You're too clever for me, Duryea. You've got me—I know it, you hound!

DURYEA

Leaving pleasantries aside—well?

CARYL (*stiffening himself for the ordeal*)

I—there's no use in denying it—I did it.

MRS. CARYL

You!

DURYEA

You admit that you took the money?

CARYL

Yes.

DURYEA

Mrs. Caryl—Savary—you are witnesses. You heard his confession.

SAVARY

Yes.

DURYEA (*to CARYL*)

You will return it to me?

CARYL

Yes.

DURYEA (*magnanimously*)

Then, of course, I won't take any action against you.

CARYL

I understand.

DURYEA (*rising*)

So everything ends happily. Er—I won't detain you any longer.

(*CARYL rises slowly, MRS. CARYL still more slowly, looking at SAVARY, who remains seated, in a puzzled manner.*)

SAVARY

Mr. Caryl.

CARYL

Yes.

SAVARY

You took the money?

CARYL

Yes—damn you!

SAVARY

What made you do it?

CARYL

What? I needed it to pay what you lost!

SAVARY

Sad, isn't it? But there are several points to be cleared up. You haven't told us how you knew about the twenty-five hundred dollars.

DURYEA (*coming to his rescue*)

Never mind. You needn't cross-examine him. He'll pay it back. The rest doesn't matter.

SAVARY (*insolently*)

No?

DURYEA

No. To put it plainly, it's none of your business.

SAVARY

You may be wrong. (*To CARYL*) Suppose I prompt you. You paid the twenty-five hundred to Duryea at about eight o'clock this evening.CARYL (*approaching the door*)

Mr. Savary, I appreciate your kindness, but the matter is closed. Good night.

SAVARY

Wait a minute. Wait a minute! Mr. Caryl, why not tell your wife what Duryea was to give you in exchange?

DURYEA (*approaching SAVARY*)

Look here, I won't allow a guest of mine to be insulted any longer. You shut up!

SAVARY

The proper spirit, I'm sure. But I insist. Mrs. Caryl, your cooperation, please.

MRS. CARYL (*detaining CARYL*)

Freddy, wait. Mr. Savary has something to say.

DURYEA

But Caryl has been humiliated enough. I don't want to hear any more.

SAVARY (*rising*)

Then you'll have to! Sit down! *Sit down!* (*DURYEA does so.*) Now, Mrs. Caryl, there's no reason that I should tell *your* story. Why don't *you* tell your husband what Duryea was to give him in exchange for his money?

CARYL (*sinking into a chair*)
Madeleine! You!

MRS. CARYL

Yes, Freddy, I—Mr. Savary, where shall I begin?

SAVARY

At the beginning, of course.

MRS. CARYL (*after a pause*)

Eight years ago—to be precise, during the winter of nineteen five—my husband was a bachelor. And like most other young bachelors with a decent supply of money and plenty of time, his life was punctuated by a series of—er—episodes. One of the—er—episodes lasted longer than usual. In fact, Freddy was very much smitten with her. She was an actress—pretty—and oh, such winning ways; and her name—at least at that time—was Fanny Hill. Freddy, correct me if I am mistaken.

CARYL (*sternly and suspiciously*)
How do *you* know this?

MRS. CARYL

Oh, I never met the lady. But you talk in your sleep, dear.

CARYL

Oh! Oh!

MRS. CARYL

Everything would have been all right if Freddy hadn't been indiscreet. He wasn't satisfied to *tell* the—the episode how much he liked her, how perfectly splendid he thought she was. He had to put it in writing. He sent her letters—oh, lots and lots of them. And being a gay and careless young bachelor, he didn't even trouble to put dates on them. *That* was unfortunate.

DURYEA (*rising*)

Mrs. Caryl, I am not interested in your husband's love affairs. You will excuse me.

SAVARY

Please remain.

DURYEA

No.

SAVARY (*drawing his revolver slowly*)

It would embarrass me, Duryea—I give you my word it would embarrass me. But if you move another inch toward the door, I might be compelled to take steps which would be mutually unpleasant. *Won't* you be seated?

DURYEA

What's this—a hold-up?

SAVARY (*pleasantly*)

You have guessed it! Now sit down. (*DURYEA sits down.*) Mrs. Caryl, continue your perfectly fascinating story.

MRS. CARYL

As I said before, the awkward part about the letters was that they were undated. There was nothing whatever to show that they had been written in nineteen five. It might have been nine-

THE SMART SET

teen seven—or nine—or eleven. And a certain person amused himself by filling in dates which pleased him; and just to be consistent, he erased the old post-marks and sent the envelopes through the mail again so that the new post-marks would correspond with the new dates. Clever, wasn't it? (*A pause. SAVARY nods appreciatively.*) And Freddy was afraid that if they came to my knowledge I would jump to the conclusion that the letters indicated a recent love affair—since our marriage. Correct, Freddy?

CARYL

Yes, yes.

MRS. CARYL

And he didn't credit his little wife with quite enough intelligence. He was afraid that she would be angry—he was afraid that she wouldn't believe that they were relics of his bachelor days.

CARYL

And you do believe, Madeleine—you do believe?

MRS. CARYL (*with supreme conviction*)

Freddy, no man tells lies in his sleep.

CARYL

Thank God! Thank God!

MRS. CARYL

But I have omitted part of the story. There were unpleasant features. The letters came into the hands of this—of this— (*Indicating DURYEA*)

SAVARY (*prompting her*)

Scoundrel.

DURYEA (*rising*)

What!

SAVARY (*motioning with his revolver*)

Blackmailer! Do you like that better?

MRS. CARYL (*very sweetly*)

This blackmailer—this—

SAVARY

Card cheat.

MRS. CARYL

This card cheat; and he threatened to make trouble. He informed my husband that unless he turned over a handsome sum of money the letters would be placed in my hands. Oh, Freddy, Freddy, you were foolish!

SAVARY

And to make a long story short, Caryl paid him twenty-five hundred dollars—paid him tonight, upon his arrival here.

DURYEA (*with a forced laugh*)

Really, gentlemen, I didn't mean anything by it. It was only a practical joke—a little harmless fun. You see, it's come to nothing.

SAVARY

As you say. You have a great sense of humor, eh?

DURYEA

Yes, yes. I—

SAVARY

Thought it would be amusing? I understand perfectly. But to continue; I am only beginning. Mr. Caryl, you admitted that you took the envelope from the safe.

CARYL

Yes.

SAVARY

Then where did you put it?

DURYEA (*hastily*)

Mr. Savary, I withdraw my accusation. Caryl can keep the money. It's his.

SAVARY

Oh, he'll keep it! Don't worry about that! There's nothing so sure. Mr. Caryl, you were about to say—

CARYL

I was about to say—

SAVARY

That you put the envelope here! (*He crosses his legs, and extracts an envelope from the inside of his own trouser leg, where it has been fastened with a hook.*)

CARYL (*hysterically*)

Yes! I was going to say— Ha! Ha!

DURYEA (*speaking involuntarily, and stopping himself suddenly*)
That's not the same envelope—

SAVARY

What I expected you to say. Caryl, come here. Examine it.

(CARYL rises, walks around the table to SAVARY, takes the envelope, glances at it, then opens it and takes out a thick package of banknotes fastened together with a paper band.)

CARYL

It's a different envelope, but the money is the same. I got it at the bank—here is the wrapper.

DURYEA

It's no use carrying this any further. Take your money and be satisfied.

SAVARY

Do nothing of the kind. (To DURYEA) A few minutes ago you were anxious to convict Caryl. Come, it's my turn now.

DURYEA

It's Caryl's money—it doesn't concern me.

SAVARY

Certainly not—but how does it come into my possession?

DURYEA (*with great uneasiness*)

You—you went to the safe and took it out.

SAVARY

Correct in every detail. Marvelous! Simply marvelous! Now arrest me.

DURYEA

No.

SAVARY

But I insist! The culprit must not go scot free! There is law in this country. Arrest me!

DURYEA

No—no—no.

SAVARY

Then I must continue with the story. I knew Caryl was to pay you the money tonight. How did I know? I am a detective—I was hired to find out. Here (*Indicating MRS. CARYL*) is my employer.

CARYL

Good Lord, Madeleine!

SAVARY

There was no reason that Duryea should not have the money in—er—his custody for a few hours, so I let you pay him. But when the room was darkened, I removed it from the safe.

DURYEA

But you can't prove anything against me! I'm within the law!

SAVARY

You go too fast, my friend. I can prove more than enough. When I robbed your safe, I didn't take the envelope—no, no! I merely substituted a package of paper for the banknotes—that was all. So when you came into the room a few seconds later, and robbed your own safe—

CARYL and MRS. CARYL

What!

SAVARY

Yes, it was most interesting. (To DURYEA) You took out the envelope. (*Rising and crossing to the safe*) You dropped it here! (*Producing the envelope from behind the safe*) And then, with great dramatic effect, you turned on the lights and declared that you had been robbed. You follow me, Mrs. Caryl? It occurred to this great practical joker that he could make your husband pay twice over. A brilliant conception, eh?

MRS. CARYL

And Freddy confessed—

CARYL

To think that I was such an ass!

THE SMART SET

SAVARY

Yes, you were quite an ass, but it's all right! He would have trapped a better man than you.

DURYEA

But you can't touch me! *(He seizes the revolver which has been left on the table, and covers SAVARY with it.)* I've got the drop on you! Quick! Hands up!

(SAVARY rises slowly and reaches toward his hip pocket deliberately.)

DURYEA

Don't try any o' that on me! I'll shoot!

(A pause; then SAVARY approaches DURYEA. The revolver wavers as SAVARY's sheer power of will dominates DURYEA.)

DURYEA

Well, if I must, I must!

(Raising the revolver to his temple, he pulls the trigger. Only a clicking noise answers his repeated efforts to fire. He throws the weapon at SAVARY'S feet.)

SAVARY

When I deal with cowards, I do not load my revolver. Duryea, the game is up! *(He turns to MR. and MRS. CARYL)* My friend and I are about to take a little walk together. I presume you will excuse us if we start a little before you!

(As they go toward the center door, SAVARY clutches his prisoner by the arm and pilots him rudely to the exit.)

CURTAIN.



YOUNG MAIDENS EARLY DEAD

By Gertrude Huntington McGiffert

PALE, honey pale, as they had dwelt too long

In underworlds, dusk's dim tranquillity
Passed into them, brows shadowed broodingly
By pomegranate leaves of death, stems strong
And thick wreath o'er the lintel where still throng
The latest come, half-veiled in shining white,
Each holding in her hand a twinkling light.
Nor hate nor love they know, nor any wrong.

So sad their song: "We were too young to weep,
Too young to sin." Bright Beatrice leans
On Dante's missal, vexing strange and deep.
Stern Jephthah's daughter blithe narcissus gleans.
"Dance! Dance!" they cry, till swift life shadows fall.
"Too young to love," they sing, "we have missed all."



WOMEN seldom suffer untold agonies.

L'OMBRE

Par Albéric Cahuet

CHEZ Paul Morange, le sympathique député dont, à la chambre, les discours ont un si grand succès d'élégance et d'éloquence, on devisait sur la peine de mort. C'était l'heure du café. Le dîner avait été ingénieux. Les cigares étaient bons. Les convictions étaient chaudes. Chavaille, le peintre de bruyères, attaquait, en termes vifs, le dernier acte de clémence présidentielle qui venait d'enlever à la guillotine un criminel particulièrement infâme, un tueur d'enfants. Morange, doucement expliquait la grâce et s'élevait contre la peine de mort dont Chavaille approuvait le principe au nom du droit de légitime défense qu'il faut bien reconnaître à la société.

Norville, le romancier, appuya :

— Je suis, dit-il, de l'avis de Chavaille. Si vous refusez à la société le droit de tuer les assassins sous ce prétexte que l'homme n'a pas le droit de supprimer l'homme, qu'il ne lui est pas permis d'anéantir un principe intelligent dont il n'est pas l'auteur, vous niez, à plus forte raison le droit de légitime défense des individus . . .

— Et cependant, observa Chavaille, un bandit m'attaque, je me défends et je tue. Au lieu de remords, j'éprouverai, j'en suis sûr, une satisfaction intime d'avoir purgé la société d'une bête féroce, dangereuse pour la sécurité commune.

Une rougeur subite colora les joues pâles de Morange.

— Il est en effet, dit-il, des situations exceptionnelles, dans lesquelles deux existences sont en conflit; c'est un mal que l'agresseur périsse; le mal est plus grand encore si la victime est l'honnête homme. Des deux maux il faut choisir

le moindre: Celui qui subit l'attaque peut se croire en droit de sacrifier à la sienne la vie de l'assassin. Ainsi fis-je autrefois.

— Toi? s'exclamèrent les auditeurs stupéfaits.

— Oui, moi, répondit Morange simple et grave. J'ai tué. Oh! c'est une vieille, une triste histoire d'un caractère un peu fantastique comme les récits des conteurs allemands.

— Dis-la nous. Veux-tu?

— Il y a longtemps, bien longtemps que s'est passée la chose, mais le souvenir en est toujours demeuré dans mon esprit aussi net, aussi tragique qu'au premier jour. J'étais alors un tout jeune homme, un étudiant de deuxième année, plein de l'insouciance de mon âge, et considérant qu'à tout prendre, notre existence s'écoulait peut-être bien dans ce meilleur des mondes possibles dont parlait le docteur Pangloss. J'habitais au second étage une chambre confortable; ma pension était presque honnête et le restaurant ne m'empoisonnait pas outre mesure; bref, je n'avais aucune raison de déplorer mon sort, et tous mes désirs se résumaient à prolonger le plus longtemps possible la situation présente.

Un soir de janvier, avec le facteur me vint un mandat paternel; je sortis aussitôt pour en toucher le montant. Le temps était humide, neigeux; j'enfouis mon visage dans le col de mon pardessus et, pour me réchauffer le corps, je marchai vite. A la poste, à côté de moi, tandis que j'emboursais mes louis, un individu en guenilles me regardait d'un air envieux; je n'y pris garde et je gagnait mon restaurant. Quand je revins chez moi, devant la porte, je tre-

buchai contre quelque chose; sur le trottoir, un individu se tenait accroupi; je reconnus l'homme en guenilles; je constatai qu'il était grand et que ses mains gelées étreignaient un bâton de route. "Un ivrogne", pensai-je; et j'entrai.

Dans ma chambre, je fis de la lumière, du feu, et, dans ma bibliothèque, je pris au hasard un ouvrage, les contes d'Hoffmann. Je lus longtemps, puis, fatigué et pensif, je me rejetai en arrière, dans mon fauteuil, l'esprit plein de ces tableaux de vieux burgs en ruines et de ces légendes semi-fantastiques qui font rêver. Une douce somnolence m'envahit, et je me serais tout à fait endormi, je crois, si je n'avais été tiré de mon engourdissement par le bruit d'une porte qui s'ouvrait derrière moi. Je crus à l'arrivée soudaine de quelque camarade, et, habitué que j'étais à ces intrusions amicales, je ne me retournai pas. Ensuite, comme je ne vis paraître personne, je crus m'être trompé ou, du moins, avoir été l'objet de quelque hallucination. Involontairement, je me remémorai les personnages mystérieux d'Hoffmann et, sans savoir pourquoi, je frémis tout à coup. Aux deux extrémités de ma chambre, il me sembla voir scintiller les fauves lueurs de deux gros yeux. Je me rendis compte bien vite que c'étaient d'une part quelques louis en pile sur ma table, et de l'autre, la crosse d'argent d'un vieux pistolet exilé sur la commode.

Après, ce fut mon ombre qui m'effraya. La lampe était placée de telle façon sur la cheminée, que mon profil se dessinait en noir, plus grand que nature, sur le papier blanc. Je fixai ma silhouette avec une ténacité fiévreuse, et, tout à coup, il me sembla la voir remuer légèrement alors que je restais immobile; je ne me trompais pas, et paralysé par une réelle terreur, j'observai ce fait étrange: mon ombre s'allongeait peu à peu; au dessus de la tête, s'en dressait une autre, plus forte et barbu; puis un bras se leva au-dessus de tout le reste, et, brandissant un gourdin, exécuta un moulinet rapide. Instinctivement, je jetai les yeux sur mes pièces d'or, et je les vis

enveloppées par une main ridée, sale, couverte d'engelures et de boue.

Alors, tout d'un élan, je m'élançai à l'autre bout de ma chambre et je saisis mon pistolet par la crosse. Il était temps, le dossier de mon fauteuil volait en éclats sous le gourdin de cet homme que j'avais coudoyé au guichet de la poste et sur lequel j'avais butté dans le ruisseau. Le vagabond était là, terrible, avec du sang dans les yeux et de la neige dans ses haillons; il grogna d'avoir manqué son coup, et le gourdin levé, marcha sur moi. Alors, dans mon affolement je ne trouvai pas une parole, et je déchargeai les deux balles de mon arme dans la poitrine de l'agresseur. L'homme tomba sans un cri, sans un soupir. J'appuyai ma main sur son cœur mort et je la retirai gantée de sang.

Je m'enfuis, je roulai plutôt que je ne descendis dans la rue; je courus à perdre haleine dans le Paris désert, sans me soucier des flocons de neige qui m'emplissaient le cou et recouvraient ma tête nue d'une calotte glacée. Dans un carrefour, une porte ouverte laissait échapper de la lumière, une coulée d'or sur le sol blanc. Je regardai dans l'embrasure et je vis l'intérieur d'un poste de police; des agents jouaient aux cartes. J'entrai, je montrai ma main rouge, on me suivit. Un instant plus tard, je reçus les félicitations du commissaire. J'avais, paraît-il, débarrassé la société d'un dangereux repris de justice.

C'est égal, quand aujourd'hui encore, cette scène horrible me revient à l'esprit, quand je revois ce misérable étendu à mes pieds dans ses guenilles, souillées de neige et de sang, avec, sur le visage, une expression de tristesse et de douleur infini, je ne me dis plus, avec une satisfaction personnelle: j'ai bien fait. Mais je prononce deux mots affreux qui me rappellent l'unique tache de mon existence, une tache de sang; ces deux mots me déchirent les lèvres lorsque je prononce avec une espèce de remords incompréhensible mais cuisant tout de même, cette phrase courte, effrayante, hideuse, dans les deux mots qui la composent: j'ai tué.

STANLEY—EXPLORER OF THE AMAZON

By George Jean Nathan

HISTORICAL theatrical dates:

- 600 B. C.—Astrology discovered by the Greeks.
- 1912 A. D.—Astrology discovered by Augustus Thomas.
- 1855 A. D.—Theory of the influence of color on the emotions propounded by Herbert Spencer.
- 1909 A. D.—Theory of the influence of color on the emotions propounded by Augustus Thomas.
- 1874 A. D.—Osteopathy promulgated by Dr. A. T. Still.
- 1906 A. D.—Osteopathy promulgated by Augustus Thomas.
- 1778 A. D.—Theory of hypnotism advanced by Friedrich Anton Mesmer.
- 1907 A. D.—Theory of hypnotism advanced by Augustus Thomas.
- 1905-1913 A. D. inc.—Theory of hypnotism practised successfully on dramatic critics and public by David Belasco.
- 1895 A. D.—Brieux causes stir in Europe.
- 1910 A. D.—Americans discover Brieux is not name of a cheese, as had been suspected.
- 1880 A. D.—Strindberg's genius flashes across Europe.
- 1912 A. D.—Strindberg discovered by Americans at Berkeley Lyceum.
- 1913 A. D.—Hofmannsthal, Björnson, Heijermans and Wedekind still undiscovered by Americans.
- 1870 A. D.—Wilkie Collins writes "Man and Wife."
- 1912 A. D.—Hartley Manners thinks it would make a timely play.
- 1868 A. D.—George Marion born.
- 1868 A. D.—George Marion stops having new ideas on the staging of musical plays.
- ? B. C.—Eve appears in public undressed.
- 1907 A. D.—Ziegfeld produces the first "Follies."
- 1881 A. D.—Klaw and Erlanger begin to improve theatrical conditions in America.
- 1881 A. D.—The public begins to swear. at Klaw and Erlanger.

1620 A. D.—The era of the Leslie Carter play.

1872 A. D.—Daly's Theater dusted for the last time.

1876 A. D.—Stanley explores the Congo.

1912 A. D.—Stanley explores the Amazon.

There are at least three unfailing ways in which any particularly incompetent playwright may deeply impress our professional dramatic critics. First, the playwright must exercise the precaution to be born in England. Second, he must be careful to have no ideas and must place this lack of ideas in the mouths of perfectly obvious Welsh or Irish or Scotch or British provincial types or characters, thus achieving what the critics will call a "genre study." Third, if he desires to be hailed as "daring," all he has to do is to have his heroine seduced, and then, when his climax comes, have the young baggage put on a shawl and quote a defense for herself at the top of her voice from Havelock Ellis without putting in the quotation marks. Other infallible ways are for the dramatist to write Sudermann's "Johannisfeuer" or "Heimat" or Maeterlinck's "Monna Vanna," having a care, however, to change the title; to get Mrs. Piske to play the thing, or, if not successful in this direction, at least to get Mrs. Thomas Whiffen to play the part of the mother; to keep George Tyler out of the lobby; to keep a weather eye on the all-important lighting effects; and not to look too much like Sydney Rosenfeld. Mr. Stanley Houghton, in brief, has impressed the critics.

Stanley's play, "HINDLE WAKES," which evoked much mental violence and copious bedizened and encomiastical ad-

jectives on the part of many of the foggy frigbeards of George's Land when it was produced some nine months ago by the Horniman mummies of Manchester, appears to me the most indecently over-estimated product that has come to us out of Britain since Arnold Bennett. A polite anterior glance at its virtues discloses little else than a first rate plenary disregard for the anachronistic pish-mince called "dramatic construction," and a fair eye to the inherent differentiating nooscopic attitudes, in certain matters, of the male and female. Beyond these, "HINDLE WAKES" is absolutely nothing more than our own David Graham Phillips's play of the old Madison Square Theater days, "The Worth of a Woman," with the scene set in Lancashire instead of Indiana—save that the British piece is not nearly so thematically valid as the latter. The trouble with Stanley is that he thinks and talks like Young's Magazine, meanwhile imagining with the aid of the critics that he is promulgating Something Big on the Sex Question. The further trouble with Stanley lies in the fact that like many other young men, he believes that he is not given to sentimentality merely because he refrains from using sentimental words. The truth is that, although widely interviewed and stamped as a "frank, fearless looker upon life," this Stanley is as soppy a bawl-brother as I have engaged with in quite a time. And the second truth is that, although characterized as a person of "bold viewpoint toward sex matters," this same playwright is bold only in the sense that he has dared put forth dog-eared and perfectly false cajoleries anent amazons as new ideas.

The sublime macaronic vacuity and stultiloquence of the alleged big moment in the exhibit, a scene whose "fierce, vital logic" (as one of them expressed it) turned several erstwhile sane and comparatively unnutty London critics into quacking piskashishes, may be conveyed without an undue flow of the perspiration. An adolescent girl meets on a bank holiday with an adolescent Don Juan. * * * More asterisks. * * * Discovery by parents. "He must right the wrong he

has done her by making her his wife."

* * * "Very well; I will." * * * Then the girl, thus: "But I will not marry him! It was my fun as much as his! He's been forced into marrying me, because he really loves Beatrice Farrar. You call him a blackguard and now you want me to marry a blackguard and reform him. I want a *real* man. I want to be a free woman!" In effect, just this. Nothing more.

What sweetish, highly lacquered bunk; what old-fashioned facetious immateriality; what elegant popgunnery! Where Phillips, a thinking man, manipulated the basic elements of this same theme adroitly and with a show of cool reason, Stanley has merely theatricalized it and, by inoculating it with an unconscious but none the less present sentimentalism and with an ignorance of organic chemistry, has reduced it to terms of college boy caterwaul, purple-cravated puny iconoclasm, lukewarm pseudo-sex-socialism. The girl pretends to refuse to marry the young man, despite the slight evasion, on the ground that he is a blackguard. Inasmuch as by her own tongue he is no more the blackguard than she, and inasmuch, to boot, as the young fellow is logically quite the "real man" in every sense, is this not pure rougestick walla-walla? With the girl's charge that anyway the young man loves another, we behold the entrance of the slaying, consuming sentimentality, a mouthing on the girl's part that definitively kills her "free woman" rant on the spot. And any physician will bear out the contention that Fanny Hawthorne's "big speech" and defense of her position based on the assertion that the amusement of the liaison was mutual amounts to nothing but theatrical soshpudding of the spooniest and wobbliest order. I am losing my patience—I, who once even sat through Hartley Manners's piece "The Indiscretion of Truth," to any speech in the highly colored, stilty dialogue of which one might have signed "yours truly" and had a letter. Stanley's soupçon, "I want to be a free woman," analyzed, means next to nothing. It is just a dainty little quasi-suffrage startler

thrown across the footlights to what female doodles happen to be out front. In short, this main episode upon which his entire play rests, and for which it has been decked with bays and studded garters, is Shaw granvillebarkerd, everyday common sense pierrelotid, the New York *Journal* ringlingd, theatricalism theatricalized—it is revolutionary in the sense that Elbert Hubbard is revolutionary; it is daring in the sense that an illustrated advertisement of ladies' underwear is daring.

There is material for a more than moderately interesting drama on this topic, but Mr. Houghton and his oblique sitting room cynicism are scarcely the twain to cope with it. Panny Hawthorne might find for herself a defense (if that be the word), and build to a truly worth-while climacteric dramatic scene, in the pages of the celebrated English pathologist Almoth Wright, in the utterances of the awe-inspiring Diane de Poitiers of the heart of Henri II, in the lamentations of the sophisticated mistress of Louis XIV, or in the superb retorts and rapier thrusts of Pompadour and of naughty Montespan. Or she might find an excellent flaunting, devoid of all Houghtonese pip, in what has been left us by Madame de la Tour, by Jules Janin and by Beaumelle. Or in the pages of Wedekind's "Hidalla" (this for the benefit of our oily, polymorphous plagiarists). Or in the blood heating thrills of "Tristan and Isolde." Or in a slender book by Helen Woljeska called "A Woman's Confessional." Or in the cutting comebacks of the angelically ferocious Madame Rachel. Or in the trembling "Evening Star" of "Tannhäuser." Or, if she were conversant with ancient Greek psychophysical documents, in the green foods with which her parents had economically and unthinkingly overfed her. Or in an adaptation of the psychological records of instinctive action, such, for example, as my excellent old tutor Professor Edward Bradford Titchener used to illustrate in the case of the cage-reared migrant that beats its wings against its cage at the approach of winter in its endeavor to fly south, although it has never flown south.

The idealist Constantine, speaking in Tchekhov's "The Seagull," asserts that it is the function of the artist to represent life neither as it is nor as we think it should be, but as we see it in our dreams. Mr. Louis N. Parker represents life neither as it is nor as we think it should be, but as we see it on magazine covers. Several pretty colors, a flower or two, a kiss and an exciting statement of the circulation—in other words, a view of a beautiful, carefree Boileau blonde whose only connection with the tumultuous worldly contents of the magazine lies in the fact that the Pompeian Massage Cream contract for the back cover ad. called for the use of yellow ink which prevented her from being a brunette. Mr. Parker is a blond playwright, a dramatizer of the ladyfinger, a creator of the cosmical pageantry of cream puffs and nesselrode puddings, a delineator of the charlotte russe, an iconographer of the maple éclair. Life, to him, is just one darned moonbeam after another. Oh, roses! Oh, tulips!

Now and again, however, Mr. Parker awakens to the grim fact that life, real, electric, vibrant life, is something else, and on such occasions he sits him down and displays his vigorous realistic outlook on it by writing—a Sardou play! It must not be inferred from this, however, that Mr. Parker is in the invariable habit of seeing life as Sardou saw it. Not at all. To be equitable to Mr. Parker, it must be admitted that every once in a while he sees life as Dumas saw it. "THE PAPER CHASE," the latest Parker opus, is the sort of play Mildred Holland would have loved to have acted if she had been alive one hundred years ago. Its characters are approximately as human as Louis Martin's restaurant; their actions as natural and cogent as a Mary Garden or an oboe. The piece, which was composed for Madame Simone, and which long ago sought the solace of the storing house, affords still another attestation to the fact that the minute an actress becomes a "star" her one overpowering, stomach-gnawing, unquenchable, devouring, atlantean ambition is to get a chance to stick on a pale blue hoopskirt, call herself the Baroness de Valenciennes

or something like that, stand in the center of a Louis XIII room lighted by a big candelabrum—and outwit Richelieu.

Thirty-eight Bull Durham and twenty-one Blue Label Soup billboard ads. to the southwest of New York (that is, in Philadelphia), I plumbed a piece called "RANSOMED," by Theodore Burt Sayre and Cleveland Rodgers. Now, in the first place, before proceeding in my characteristic manner to chat amiably about a whole lot of things that have nothing to do with the case, but things which are really often much more interesting and informative than a criticism of the play in point would be, I wish to state that "RANSOMED" is a most morose, woe-begone and niggling gimcrack. After the orchestra had rendered Suppe's "Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna," what is left of the Walnut Street Theater curtain lifted itself with an asthmatic grunt and we beheld Bassett, the butler, serving five o'clock tea. Augusta Brent was there in low neck. Presently Maurice Hallowell entered. He was encased in a dress suit. And, after a sip or two, Maurice (who was called Moe Rees) and Augusta left for the Opera—not before Moe Rees, however, had referred to his hostess's husband as a "philanthrofit." After this auspicious beginning, I sat up in my chair and prepared to enjoy myself.

Following a cozy little confabulation on the dastardly machinations of the Black Hand, that lasted over a period of half an hour and in which all the actors took part (except, of course, Moe Rees, who was still at the Opera with Augusta), somebody rushed in and screamed out that little Bobby had been stolen! At this juncture a rheumatic groan began to echo through the auditorium, and presently the senile curtain hove into sight at the top of the proscenium arch on its downward course, thus providing the audience with the hint that it had just witnessed an exciting act-climax. The manly musicians now negotiated the Meditation from "Thais" with great gusto. A lewd and gaudy encore ensuing, the union then invaded Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." Another unholy sound as of intestinal trouble, and up limped the curtain again. Moe Rees, who was

classified on the program (that had a truly charming picture of Ethel Barrymore at the age of fifteen on the cover) as "a distinguished mural painter," was visible.

It seems that Bobby's father was the District Attorney whose jutey forbade him to pay ransom and encourage kidnapping even when his own son was concerned. Bobby's mother, however, was just full of maternal instinct and mother love, she being the heroine and having seen "Madame X" and a lot of other plays. But—"right is right and wrong is wrong!" insisted the District Attorney, who evidently had been reading Dr. Frank Crane, Edwin Bjorkman, Walt Mason, Orison Swett Marden, Edward Bok and other such revolutionaries, and was now, in the easy argot, stealing their stuff. Louise, the Maternal Instinct, looked in the grate and said nothing. However, the astute reader will already have guessed that she was thinking of appealing to Moe Rees, who, years ago, had luvved her. Husband left the room, and the Maternal Instinct and Moe Rees were face to face.

"Yes," said Moe Rees, "I will help you get back your child, but you must pay the price!" The Maternal Instinct looked at him hard. "The price?" she asked in quavering tones; "the price? What do you mean?" Of course, she was so innocent she thought Moe Rees was talking about George Broadhurst's play. Moe Rees told her what he meant and then came the "conflict of emotions." Oh, the suspense! Pleadings, supplications, tears. O tempora, O Moe Rees! But Moe Rees was adamant. Finally, the Maternal Instinct stood erect, majestic, her being spiritualized, her face hallowed by the spotlight. "I will pay!" she announced. From above, another neuralgic throb and the sound of appendicitis pains accompanied by the curtain. Also loud applause from an audience that sat spellbound at this new, sensational climax, an audience which probably recognized "Monna Vanna" as that painting that was stolen last year from the Louvre. The union obliged now with the "Caprice" of Chaminade. Twenty-five minutes later, Bob-

by was brought back, the Maternal Instinct was forgiven for her splendid and sanctified sacrifice, Moe Rees was baffled and I discovered that I had been sitting, throughout the whole play, on my hat!

For some reason that has never divulged itself to me with unwonted clarity, fairy tales and plays made from fairy tales are widely held to be things without the domain of the prosaic and rowdy pinpricks of adult criticism. They are "for children and grown-up children," in the sagacious and antiseptic pronunciamientos of the producers, and are, hence, not meant for serious attention. He who would make bold to criticize a fairy tale is, alas, a surly, lemon-dispositioned soul. He who would seek to analyze a fairy tale play is, alack, an ass of vast pretentiousness, a painter of the lily, etc., etc.

One has heard such superior flea bites, such burking galimathias, such condescending and scrabblish hocus-pocus often enough. Whenever the like approaches my aural cavities, I make up what for technical purposes may be called my mind that its sponsor extrudes this particular species of flummery for the very stable reason that he has not any clear ideas to express on the subject of fairy tales or fairy plays. One of the simplest and most magnetic ways to express an opinion on any subject is to deny that the subject is open to discussion. Granting that fairy tales and the plays made from them are intended primarily for children (which personally I decline to grant for the reason that theatrical managers are out for pesos rather than for the altruistic purpose of pleasing only youngsters at matinees, a sport in which there is not much emolument), I cannot see why this fact removes such exhibits from critical hands. A child's clothing, diet, A B C's, playmates, governess and exercise are subjected to the most rigorous criticism. Why not, then, its amusements? The disinclination of the proper persons to look after this latter element has been responsible for numerous fell esthetical errors. As a result, youngsters are regularly induced to attend such theatrical ratbroth as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" on the theory of

Topsy and Little Eva, when as a matter of truth the exhibit misleads and distorts the juvenile intellect and flashes before it a panorama of inaccurate and deleterious nonsense. Again, say the sages, fairy tales and fairy plays are of too tender a fabric to be handled save with the most delicate of gloves. And yet poetry is open to criticism; and yet the most sensitive of music is open to criticism; and yet the most exquisitely fragile specimens of the art of dry point are open to criticism—and are opened! In the light of the present plethora of plays intended for children (according to the advertisements), these remarks seem neither malapert nor untimely.

One of the recent productions is that made by Mr. Belasco of the Rostand work entitled "A GOOD LITTLE DEVIL," done into English with grace and suavity by that capable craftsman Austin Strong. Hofmannsthal, in his pure little tragedy "Der Tor und der Tod," shows us Claudio, the Fool, who has sunk himself in consuming egoism, and who has disemboweled his emotions with artificiality and introspection. Death comes to gather him in its arms, Death with a violin. The Fool looks back across the gulf of life and awakens to the void in which he has passed his hollow years. "Let me live!" he cries. "Let me seek love and pain and pleasure!" he begs, implores, wheedles. The bow draws across the violin in wailing, quivering measures, and the Fool sees his dead mistress, his dead mother, his dead friend pass before him. While life was still his, they meant nothing to him. Now, as the violin melody of life is drawing to its close, he realizes—too late. And his soul cries itself to sleep as Death draws the bow over the strings for the last time.

So in "A GOOD LITTLE DEVIL," the Fool is sought out on the crossroads of life by the spirit of his youth. The hand of the latter points out to him through the enveloping veil of artificiality the wild red clover love of other days, love born of starlight and the pine breezes, and the Fool, in this case before the violin is hushed forever, turns his eyes from the love of electric gleamings and whiffs

of Jockey Club back to the calico of long ago. A pleasant and wholesome little fable, pleonastically sentimental and sporadically prosy and in Lydian measures, but bequeathing withal an agreeable *Saturday Evening Post* "uplift" feeling. Mr. Belasco, in the main, has achieved happy results in his physical investiture of the exhibit, this particularly in his nicely devised clash and counter-clash of colored lights in the first act, which serve to bring out the unreality, the fairy atmosphere of the moment. The usual Belasco sin of over-elaboration, while not absent, yet seems appropriate to the phantasmagorical material with which the producer is here dealing. The "fairies" in the exhibit are deplorably real, which, in view of the charm of their earthly surroundings, comes as a pity. I have one of the finest little imaginations in the world (I once even imagined a "drawing room," as the program requested me to, in an Al Woods production), but my imagination cannot cope with the problem of turning actresses into fairies. It might at a pinch go as far as Marie Doro or Mabel Taliaferro—but beyond that it gets upon its hind legs and barks. Also do I feel impelled to criticize the excessive use of baby spotlights by Mr. Belasco, a use which frequently gives one the impression of a flotilla of battleships in the Hudson playing their many searchlights up and down otherwise alluring and tranquilly dreaming Riverside Drive. But, above these minor discords the *leit-motif* of the play is still audible as it trickles on its way down the keyboard of the heart.

In view of the persistent rumor that "Nathan is down on Belasco and that's why he roasts his shows"—based on the fact that Nathan declined to be buncombed by the patronizing metaphysical "thought" of "Peter Grimm," the Morton Princely pretense of "The Case of Becky" (despite the fact that an I-assure-you-this-play-is-accurate edition of that august and sapient psychologist was presented gratis to the critics by the considerate Mr. Belasco before the opening of the play) and the sublime puerilities of "The Governor's Lady"—it

comes as a readily appreciable shock to me to have to praise this latest production. The sponsors of the rumor will now unquestionably think that I have regained my long-lost sense and powers of judgment; in other words, that I am a regular dramatic critic. And the thought of that hurts me! Nothing gives me quite so much pleasure as the knowledge that some persons regard me as a complete dampfool. It makes me so sure of myself.

"CHAINS," by an English typist, Elizabeth Baker—Americanized by Porter Emerson Browne. In the original, a work of much saltpetre and escharotic pungency as a "leaf out of life." Here revealed as the unsexed tale of a New Jersey clerk who spends four acts complaining of his bitter lot until the time arrives for an American happy ending. A line of commendation for the human endeavors of Miss Olive Wyndham, an actress who every once in a while is criticized adversely for "her failure convincingly to express the emotions," the conventional conceptions as to how an actress should convincingly express the emotions being as follows:

1. GREAT STRESS—Distending and contracting the upper portion of the corset a dozen times in quick succession.
2. GRIEF—Looking into the grate fire and biting the lower lip, meanwhile clutching a handkerchief in the right hand.
3. JOY—Crossing rapidly three times from left to right and right to left, periodically ejaculating: "Oh, I'm so happy!"—Suzette, the French maid, in the meanwhile standing up stage, looking on in a state of puzzled alarm and inquiring finally: "Is madame not feeling well to-day?"
4. ANXIETY—Clutching the red velvet portière with the right hand and looking fixedly out of the window, the left hand being resolved into a fist and pressed against the left cheek.
5. FEAR—Bending the stomach inward at the waistline, open hands pressed tightly against the breasts, mouth half open. This method may be varied by leaning against a table, fixing the gaze hard at the audience and saying, in a hushed voice, "Oh, my Gawd!"
6. INDIFFERENCE—Elevating the eyebrows, shrugging the right shoulder, going over to the mantelpiece and carelessly sniffing the flowers in the vase.
7. DOUBT—Sitting at a writing desk and biting the end of a penholder.
8. ANGER—Jumping up from a chair and, sweeping from the room, slamming the door with an awful bang.

THE BURDEN OF HUMOR

By H. L. Mencken

WHAT is the origin of the prejudice against humor? Why is it so dangerous, if you would keep the public confidence, to make the public laugh?

Is it because humor and sound sense are essentially antagonistic? Has humanity found by experience that the man who sees the fun of life is unfitted to deal sanely with its problems? I think not. No man had more of the comic spirit in him than William Shakespeare, and yet his serious reflections, by the sheer force of their sublime obviousness, have pushed their way into the race's arsenal of immortal platitudes. So, too, with Æsop, and with Lincoln and Johnson, to come down the scale. All of these men were humorists, and yet all of them performed prodigies of indubitable wisdom. And contrariwise, many an undeniable pundit has had his guffaw. Huxley, if he had not been the greatest intellectual duellist of his age, might have been its greatest wit. And Beethoven, after soaring to the heights of tragedy in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, turned to the divine fooling, the irresistible bull-fiddling of the *scherzo*.

No, there is not the slightest disharmony between sense and nonsense, humor and respectability, despite the almost universal tendency to assume that there is. But, why, then, that widespread error? What actual fact of life lies behind it, giving it a specious appearance of reasonableness? None other, I am convinced, than the fact that the average man is far too stupid to make a joke.

He may see a joke and love a joke, particularly when it floors and flabber-

gasts some person he dislikes, but the only way he can himself take part in the priming and pointing of a new one is by acting as its target. In brief, his personal contact with humor tends to fill him with an accumulated sense of disadvantage, of pricked complacency, of sudden and crushing defeat; and so, by an easy psychological process, he is led into the idea that the thing itself is incompatible with true dignity of character and intellect. Hence his deep suspicion of jokers, however their thrusts. "What a damphool!"—this same half-pitying tribute he pays to wit and butt alike. He cannot separate the virtuoso of comedy from his general concept of comedy itself, and that concept is inextricably mixed with memories of foul ambushes and mortifying hurts. And so it is not often that he is willing to admit any wisdom in a humorist, or to condone frivolity in a sage.

In all this, I believe, there is a plausible explanation of the popular, and even of the critical attitude toward the late Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain). Unless I am so wholly mistaken that my only expiation lies in suicide, Mark was the noblest literary artist who ever set pen to paper on American soil, and not only the noblest artist, but also one of the most profound and sagacious philosophers. From the beginning of his maturity down to his old age he dealt constantly and earnestly with the deepest problems of life and living, and to his consideration of them he brought a truly amazing instinct for the truth, an almost uncanny talent for ridding the essential thing of its deceptive husks of tradition, prejudice, flub-dub and balderdash. No man, not even

Nietzsche, ever did greater execution against those puerilities of fancy which so many men mistake for religion, and over which they are so eager to dispute and break heads. No man had a keener eye for that element of pretense which is bound to intrude itself into all human thinking, however serious, however painstaking, however honest in intent. And yet, because the man had humor as well as acumen, because he laughed at human weakness instead of weeping over it, because he turned now and then from the riddle of life to the joy of life—because of this habit of mind it is the custom to regard him lightly and somewhat apologetically, as one debarred from greatness by unfortunate infirmities.

William Dean Howells probably knew him better than any other human being, but in all that Howells has written about him one is conscious of a conditioned admiration, of a subtle fear of allowing him too much merit, of an ineradicable disinclination to take him quite seriously. The Mark that Howells draws is not so much a great artist as a glorious *enfant terrible*. And even William Lyon Phelps, a hospitable and penetrating critic, wholly loose of orthodox shackles—even Phelps hems and haws a bit before putting Mark above Oliver Wendell Holmes, and is still convinced that "The Scarlet Letter" is an incomparably finer work of art than "Huckleberry Finn."

Well, such notions will die hard, but soon or late, I am sure, they will inevitably die. So certain am I, indeed, of their dying that I now formally announce their death in advance, and prepare to wait in patience for the delayed applause. In one of his essays Dr. Phelps shows how critical opinion of Mark has gradually evolved from scorn into indifference, and from indifference into toleration, and from toleration into apologetic praise, and from apologetic praise into hearty praise. The stage of unqualified enthusiasm is coming—it has already cast its lights before England—and I am very glad to join the lodge as a charter member. Let me now set down my faith, for the literary archeologists of day after tomorrow:

I believe that "Huckleberry Finn" is one of the great masterpieces of the world, that it is the full equal of "Don Quixote" and "Robinson Crusoe," that it is vastly better than "Gil Blas," "Tristram Shandy," "Nicholas Nickleby" or "Tom Jones." I believe that it will be read by human beings of all ages, not as a solemn duty but for the honest love of it, and over and over again, long after every book written in America between the years 1800 and 1860, with perhaps three exceptions, has disappeared entirely save as a classroom fossil. I believe that Mark Twain had a clearer vision of life, that he came nearer to its elementals and was less deceived by its false appearances, than any other American who has ever presumed to manufacture generalizations, not excepting Emerson. I believe that, admitting all his defects, he wrote better English, in the sense of cleaner, straighter, vividder, saner English, than either Irving or Hawthorne. I believe that four of his books—"Huck," "Life on the Mississippi," "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," and "A Connecticut Yankee"—are alone worth more, as works of art and as criticisms of life, than the whole output of Cooper, Irving, Holmes, Mitchell, Stedman, Whittier and Bryant. I believe that he ranks well above Whitman and certainly not below Poe. I believe that he was the true father of our national literature, the first genuinely American artist of the blood royal.

Such is my feeling at the moment, and such has been my feeling for many a moon. If any gentleman in the audience shares it, either wholly or with qualifications, then I advise him to buy and read the biography of Mark lately published by Albert Bigelow Paine (*Harper*), for therein he will find an elaborate, painstaking and immensely interesting portrait of the man, and sundry shrewd observations upon the writer.

Not that I agree with Paine in all his judgments. Far from it, indeed. It seems to me that he gets bogged hopelessly when he tries to prove that "The Innocents Abroad" is a better book than "A Tramp Abroad," that he commits a crime when he puts "Joan of Arc"

above "Huck Finn," and that he is too willing to join Howells and other such literary sacristans in frowning down upon Mark's clowning, his weakness for vulgarity, his irrepressible maleness. In brief, Paine is disposed, at times, to yield to current critical opinion against what must be his own good sense. But when you have allowed for all this—and it is not obtrusive—the thing that remains is a vivid and sympathetic biography, a book with sound merit in every chapter of it, a mountain of difficulties triumphantly surmounted, a fluent and excellent piece of writing. Paine tells everything that is worth hearing, whether favorable to Mark or the reverse, and leaves out all that is not worth hearing. One closes the third volume with unbounded admiration for the industry of the biographer, and with no less admiration for his frankness and sagacity. He has given us a rich and colorful book, presenting coherently a wise selection from a perfect chaos of materials. The Mark Twain that emerges from it is almost as real as Huckleberry Finn.

And what a man that Mark Twain was! How he stood above and apart from the world, like Rabelais come to life again, observing the human comedy, chuckling over the eternal fraudulence of man! What a sharp eye he had for the bogus, in religion, politics, art, literature, patriotism, virtue! What contempt he emptied upon shams of all sorts—and what pity! Mr. Paine reveals for us very clearly, by quotation and exposition, his habitual attitude of mind. He regarded all men as humbugs, but as humbugs to be dealt with gently, as humbugs too often taken in and swindled by their own humbuggery. He saw how false reasoning, false assumptions, false gods had entered into the very warp and woof of their thinking; how impossible it was for them to attack honestly the problems of being; how helpless they were in the face of life's emergencies. And seeing all this, he laughed at them, but not often with malice. What genuine indignation he was capable of was leveled at life itself and not at its victims. Through all his later years the

riddle of existence was ever before him. He thought about it constantly; he discussed it with everyone he knew; he made copious notes of his speculations. But he never came to any soothing custom made conclusion. The more he examined life, the more it appeared to him to be without meaning, and even without direction; the more he pondered upon the idea of God, the more a definite idea of God eluded him. In the end, as Mr. Paine tells us, he verged toward a hopeless pessimism. Death seemed to him a glad release, an inestimable boon. When his daughter Jean died, suddenly, tragically, he wrote to her sister: "I am so glad she is out of it and safe—safe!"

It is this reflective, philosophizing Clemens who stands out most clearly in Mr. Paine's book. In his own works, our glimpses of him are all too brief. His wife and his friends opposed his speculations, perhaps wisely, for the artist might have been swallowed up in the sage. But he wrote much to please himself and left a vast mass of unpublished manuscript behind him. Certainly it is to be hoped that these writings will see the light, and before long. One book described by Mr. Paine, "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes," would appear to be a satire so mordant and so large in scale that his admirers have a plain right to demand its publication. And there should be a new edition, too, of his confession of doubt, "What is Man?" of which a few copies were printed for private distribution in 1905. Yet again we have a right to ask for most if not all of his unpublished stories and sketches, many of which were suppressed at the behest of Mrs. Clemens, for reasons no longer worth considering. There is good ground for believing that his reputation will gain rather than suffer by the publication of these things, and in any case it can withstand the experiment, for "Huck Finn" and "Life on the Mississippi" and the "Connecticut Yankee" will remain, and so long as they remain there can be no question of the man's literary stature. He was one of the great artists of all time. He was the full equal of Cervantes and Molière, Swift and Defoe. He was and is the one

authentic giant of our national literature.

Descending gracefully a few thousand feet we come to George Ade, who has suffered like Clemens for the popular distrust of humor, and perhaps even more, for a number of critics have gone to Clemens's defense as an artist, albeit usually half-heartedly, whereas no one, so far as I know, has ever done the same for Ade. His fables in slang are praised much as Eddie Foy is praised—that is to say, to the accompaniment of an apologetic insistence that even a clown may be genuinely funny. The best thing I have ever heard said of him is that he is clean, that he does not import the coarse buffooneries of the barroom, the smoking car and the wedding reception into his books. And yet it seems to me, for all this determination to regard him only as a wayside scaramouche, charged with no higher mission than that of raising a horse laugh, that Ade is one of the few really respectable literary craftsmen now at large in our midst; that he comes nearer to making literature, when he has full steam up, than any save a scant dozen of our current native authors; and that the body of his work—I mean his book work and not his stage work—is in closer contact with life as the typical American leads it than the work of nine-tenths of our fictioneers, even our more serious fictioneers.

No single book of Robert W. Chambers, or Jack London, or Alice French or Richard Harding Davis, shows a half of the shrewd observation, the accurate generalizing, the keen sense of national peculiarity, the feeling for situation and character, that you will find in such Adean fables as "The Good Fairy of the Eighth Ward and the Dollar Excursion of the Steam Fitters," "The Mandolin Players and the Willing Performer," "The Honest Money Maker and the Partner of His Joys," and "The Adult Girl Who Got Busy Before They Could Ring the Bell on Her." And if you gave me my free choice between any one of Ade's four fable books, or his "In Babel" on the one hand, and the whole published works of George Barr McCutcheon, or Meredith Nicholson, or

Ellen Glasgow, or Harold MacGrath, or Amélie Rives, or even Gertrude Ather-ton, on the other hand, I should choose the Ade book without the slightest hesitation, as vastly more humanlike and interesting today and much more likely to be alive tomorrow.

Ade, in truth, is so little the mere clown that the chief impression I get from him is that of grimness. Like all genuine satirists, he forces his knife well below the skin and is not afraid to draw blood. At times, as in the fable of "Paducah's Favorite Comedians" and in "Why 'Gondola' Was Put Away," he is fooling and no more, but at other times, as in the fables of "Little Lutie," "The Honest Money Maker," "The Corporation Director and the Mislaid Ambition" and "The Ex-Chattel," and in such stories as "George's Return" and "Mr. Payson's Satirical Christmas," you will find him on the edges of a deep seriousness and wielding a devastating humor. He does not stop when he has made you laugh at pretense: he tries to make you detest it. And whenever he dallies with emotion, it is with a hand so sure that there is never any sense of straining, of theatricality, of unreality. I know of no American book which describes the unashamed sentimentality of youth with more accuracy and feeling than "Artie," save it be Frank Norris's "Blix." And I know of no writing which pricks the elemental affectations more neatly or more savagely than such fables as "The Roystering Blades," "The Common Carrier," "The Heir and the Heiress," "How Albert Sat In" and "The Old-Fashioned Prosecutor," in the new Ade book, "KNOCKING THE NEIGHBORS" (Doubleday-Page). Here we have satire at its best, terse, ferocious and stinging. If you see only the surface grotesquerie, the fault is yours and not Ade's; there are persons, I dare say, who see only low comedy in Rabelais.

But these things are mere sketches, light trifles, impromptus in bad English, easy to write and of no importance! Are they? Don't believe it for a moment. Ten or twelve years ago, when Ade was at the height of his celebrity as a newspaper Sganarelle, scores of hack

comedians tried to imitate him—and all failed. I myself was of the number. I operated a so-called funny column in a daily newspaper, and like my brethren near and far, I essayed to manufacture fables in slang. What miserable botches they were! How easy it was to imitate Ade's style—and how impossible to imitate his substance! No, please don't get the notion that it is simple matter to write such a fable as that of "The All-Night Seance and the Limit That Ceased to Be," or that of "The Preacher Who Flew His Kite, But Not Because He Wished to Do So." Far from it, indeed. On the contrary, the only way you will ever accomplish the feat will be by first getting Ade's firm grasp upon character, and his ability to think out a straightforward, amusing story, and his alert feeling for contrast and climax, and most of all, his extraordinary talent for devising novel, vivid and unforgettable phrases. Those phrases of his sometimes wear the external vestments of a passing slang, but they are no more commonplace and vulgar at bottom than Gray's "mute, inglorious Milton" or the "somewhere East of Suez" of Kipling. They reduce an idea to a few pregnant syllables. They give the attention a fillip and light up a whole scene in a flash. They are the running evidences of an eye which sees clearly and of a mind which thinks shrewdly. They give distinction to the work of a man who has so well concealed a highly complex and efficient artistry that few have ever noticed it.

Of the humor of Irvin S. Cobb, a newcomer upon the sawdust, I can give you no such favorable account, though no less a literary jurymen than the Hon. Robert H. Davis, whom I love and venerate extremely, puts him above Bret Harte and has even ranked him with Mark Twain. I can't afford to encircle Robert with the hook, for I have been doing a lot of vociferous praising myself to-day, and perhaps it has overburdened many a tender stomach. But all the same I am forced to raise a feeble voice in dissent, for a diligent reading of Mr. Cobb's "ANATOMY" (*Doran*) has failed to do more than gently tickle me. What he

offers here, indeed, is quite elemental burlesque writing of the sort made familiar by Bill Nye's newspaper articles and Jerome K. Jerome's "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow," that forgotten best seller of yesteryear. I do not say that Mr. Cobb is not funny; what I do say is that his fun keeps to the surface, that its chief quality is its obviousness. For example: "There never was a hansom cab made that would hold a fat man comfortably unless he left the doors open, and that makes him feel undressed." For example: "Your hair gives you bother so long as you have it and more bother when it starts to go. You are always doing something for it and it is always showing deep-dyed ingratitude in return; or else the dye isn't deep enough, which is even worse." For instance: "Once there was a manicure lady who wouldn't take a tip, but she is now no more. Her indignant sisters stabbed her to death with hatpins and nail files." I do not think I quote unfairly; I have tried to give you honest specimens of Mr. Cobb's manner. It is not a manner to arouse enthusiasm.

In his more serious work, in the book called "BACK HOME" (*Doran*), he is far more satisfying. Here he attempts a series of character sketches of the odd folk in a small Kentucky river town—apparently his native Paducah—and here he is unfailingly persuasive and entertaining. One feels that he knows these people perfectly, and what is more, that he loves them well. The result is an excellent row of portraits, a bit old-fashioned but altogether attractive.

A few more tomes of humor before we pass to graver things. The best of them, and by long odds, is "ELKAN LUBLINER: AMERICAN," by Montague Glass (*Doubleday-Page*), an author whose creatures are now as familiar to most of us as the characters of Dickens. The seven tales in the present book carry us from Elkan's arrival in the United States, a raw immigrant boy, to the great commercial assaults and ambushes of his manhood, as a full partner in the eminent popular price cloak and suit firm of Polatkin, Scheikowitz & Co. Can it be, as I hear, that there are

American Jews who object to these stories, as derogatory to their race and faith? Then there are worse asses among the Jews than I ever suspected. The truth is that Mr. Glass, for all his poking fun at Jewish foibles, is keenly alert to those large virtues which make the Jews a stable and successful people—their family pride and fidelity, their intelligent charity, their respect for an obligation, their constructive imagination, their constant looking ahead. Let the professional Jew who would gain applause by denouncing Glass give a fair reading to "A Match for Elkan Lubliner" or "Sweet and Sour," two stories wholly creditable to Jewish character and at the same time wholly true to it. No more of this cheap bosh. Glass is an artist in whom every civilized Jew should see something to be proud of; he has done in the comic vein what Israel Zangwill did in a more serious vein, and unless I greatly err, he has done it even better. And meanwhile, he has set a significant example to those American short story writers who waste their effort in imitating one another, and are blind to the enormous stores of fresh material that girt them about.

"THE STAGE OF FOOLS," by Leonard Merrick (*Kennerley*), is less interesting, for though some of the stories in the book—it has seventeen in all—show Merrick at his cleverest, there are others which show him at his worst. "The Girl at Lake Lincoln," for example, is the tedious and artificial sort of stuff that one might expect to find in an English penny weekly; no doubt it goes back to the author's apprenticeship, and earned him a pound when he needed the money badly. But why reprint such drivel now? And why top it with such Bow Bells sentimentality as is to be found in "The Life They Said She Ruined"? I have hitherto called attention to the damage that Merrick is suffering by this occasional reprinting of his hack work; unless he is better edited hereafter he will be hurt beyond repair. "AS HE WAS BORN," by Tom Gallon (*Doran*), need not detain us; it is an ingenious extravaganza, a new

and astonishing version of the old fable of Lady Godiva, and too much telling about it would spoil it. So with "Just Box," by Paul West (*Doran*), a series of letters from one small boy to another, much in the style of Judge Shute's "Plupy" books; I leave it to your own chuckling inspection.

"JACK—ONE OF US," by Gilbert Frankau (*Doran*), gets into a newer field. It is a full length novel in verse—and not in simple doggerel, by any means, but in the complex, tricky stanza of "Don Juan" and "The Vision of Judgment." Mr. Frankau handles that stanza with truly surprising skill. Not only does he surmount all its natural difficulties, but he actually introduces new difficulties into it, embellishing it with recondite puns, Pope-like antitheses, and nerve racking combinations of English, French, Latin and German. As for his story, it is a tale of amour, with a hero ranging the earth from Frankfurt a/M. to Palm Beach, Fla., and finally facing the fateful parson in rural England. Don't miss this genuine novelty; it will amuse you far more than any of the current best sellers.

Which brings us to George Moore and the second volume of his trilogy of confessions, "Hail and Farewell" (*Appleton*). He calls it "SALVE"—the salutation, not the unguent—and it deals at large with his return to Ireland, hot for Gaelic and the Neo-Celtic Movement, and with his gradual cooling and revolt. The thing that floored him was his discovery that the Irish held their faith reverently, that they had no work for an iconoclast to do. He tells the whole story, sparing no name and no detail: how he set up housekeeping in Dublin and announced his readiness to manufacture a new Irish literature; how his first efforts in that direction came under ecclesiastical censure; how he talked the thing over with Martyn, Kuno Meyer, Father Tom Finley, Frank Fay and all the other lights of the movement, through almost endless days and nights; and how, in the end, he came to the conclusion that literature was impossible under the Church of Rome, and so applied for communion in the Church of

England and prepared to go back to London.

Such is the skeleton upon which Moore hangs his reminiscences, theories and speculations—a vast mass of Puckish and diverting dogmatizing about men, pictures, cities, ideas and books. It takes him just 220 pages to expound his doctrine that Catholicism is incompatible with the art of letters, but you need have no fear of that prolixity. Moore is one of the rare and fortunate writers whose manner is so charming that no one cares much about their matter. He once made a fascinating story of his mother's funeral, and he could do the same, I have no doubt, with an account of his adventures in dentistry or a new numbering of Ulysses' ships. Here he embellishes and relieves his argument with a thousand characteristic digressions—into the medication of sick cats, the invention of sauces, the training of children, the authorship of the New Testament, the wastefulness of celibacy, the hanging of pictures, the tricks of house agents, the sufferings of schoolboys, the impertinence of relatives, the sorrows of the world. In brief, he wanders and maunders; but what delightful wanderings—what artful maundering! If it bores you, even for a moment, I guess wrong.

James Lane Allen's "THE HEROINE IN BRONZE" (*Macmillan*) is a middle-aged bachelor's effort to create an idyl of young love, and I lament to report that the success of it is not commensurate with the striving. Mr. Allen's lovers fall out over a misunderstanding which five words, or even an eloquent wink of the eye, might have set right; and in their discourse with each other they employ a somewhat elevated and self-conscious style, not at all, I fancy, like the meowing habitual to their age and state of mind. But here I do not press the point, for I begin to gather a respectable antiquity myself, and it is a long, long while since I last hung over a garden gate and wooed the ear of a *backfish*.

Let me praise Mr. Allen for his pretty picture of a rising author's dreams and hardships and pass on to Mrs. Wharton,

whose "THE REEF" (*Appleton*) is so far below "Ethan Frome" that it seems to be by a different novelist. Here we have the story of a dashing young American diplomat (the Indiana *motif*—the Siegfried of our national romance!) who stops off in Paris with Sophie Viner on his way to court the widowed Anna Leath. George Darrow's intentions are honorable; he is sorry for poor Sophie and plans to do no more than take her to a few theaters. But the affair goes much further than that, and so he is given a great shock later on, when he finds Sophie installed in the Leath chateau as governess to Anna's little daughter—and *fiancée* to Anna's stepson! No doubt you can imagine the rest: how suspicions began to circulate, how Sophie breaks down and confesses, how the stepson rages and Anna weeps, and how, in the end, it is all smoothed over nicely and George and Anna make up. A tawdry story, almost bad enough for a best seller, but relieved and embellished, of course, by Mrs. Wharton's keen wit, her skillful management of situation, her dramatic sense, her finished and admirable craftsmanship. However, I cannot recommend it as a fair specimen of her work, nor even as a passable specimen. That would be unjust to you, and more unjust to Mrs. Wharton.

"BROKEN ARCS," by Darrell Figgis (*Kennerley*), is an intolerably bad British novel of the seduced-and-deserted order, and "THE PLACE OF HONEYMOONS," by Harold MacGrath (*Bobbs-Merrill*), is an American best seller. Ditto "THE HEATHER MOON," by C. N. and A. M. Williamson (*Doubleday-Page*), albeit the authors are English. "PRUDENT PRISCILLA," by Mary C. E. Wemyss (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is an amusing character sketch of a well-meaning, fatuous busybody. "THE STREET OF THE TWO FRIENDS," by F. Berkeley Smith (*Doubleday-Page*), is a series of thumbnail notes of student life in Montmartre and the Latin Quarter, with an occasional excursion into rural France—and one to Budapest. In them, a humane purpose: to defend the slandered Parisienne. I move quickly, hit-

ting only the high places. Don't miss "A MISCELLANY OF MEN," a new collection of short essays by Gilbert K. Chesterton (*Dodd-Mead*), showing all his customary ingenuity and impudence and eloquence and sophistry. Or "MY LIFE IN PRISON," by Donald Lowrie (*Kennerley*), an intimate picture of San Quentin, extremely well done. Or "SONGS FROM BOOKS," by Rudyard Kipling (*Doubleday-Page*), a gathering up of the scattered "quotations" and lyrical passages in the poet's prose works, many of them with new stanzas. But this last belongs to my annual poetry article, which I hope to set before you, if I survive the poetry, in April.

Finally, five books of short stories by practised hands—"BABY GRAND," by John Luther Long (*Badger*); "THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY," by Henry Van Dyke (*Scribner*); "THE FIRST HURDLE," by John Reed Scott (*Lippincott*); "THE FALL GUY," by Brand Whitlock (*Bobbs-Merrill*), and "THE RAID OF THE GUERRILLA," by Charles Egbert Craddock (*Miss Murfree*) (*Lippincott*). To go backward, Miss Murfree, as usual, holds close to her Tennessee hills, and Mr. Whitlock finds most of his inspiration in city politics. Both writers deserve praise, not for towering genius, for they fall a good deal short of it, but at least for painstaking and conscientious effort. Mr. Whitlock, in particular, tries to get into his stories something more than mere fables. Such things as "Fowler Brunton" and "The Girl That's Down," indeed, are as much tracts as stories. But this *naïf* seriousness of purpose needs no apology. "The Man Without a Country" is also a tract, and so is "The Kreutzer Sonata," and so, I suspect, are "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "Without Benefit of Clergy." The thing we have to fear in this country is not the too serious writer, but the too facile writer. We have among us a lot of scrivener boys and girls so all-fired clever that they can make novels and stories out of sows' ears. Discovering this magic talent, and seeing

it easily convertible into money, they cease forthwith to hunt for more seemly material. The result is a great emission of flapdoodle, a debauch of bosh. An American novel or short story with a genuine idea in it, and some intelligible philosophy of life behind it, is as rare as an honest Congressman. When such a man as Theodore Dreiser or Frank Norris or David Graham Phillips comes along, putting hard thought into his work and careful observation and serious purpose, the first impulse of the candy-fed public is to dismiss him as a bore. If he wins recognition at all, it takes him a long time. And too often, as in Phillips's case, his final portion is hopeless discouragement.

And not only our youngsters write this bosh I have mentioned, but also a number of our oldsters. For example, Dr. Van Dyke, who does it with an absurd air of dignity and importance in "THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY." Here we have a book printed on fine paper, and elegantly stamped in gilt and three colors, and illustrated by such excellent artists as Garth Jones, Blendon Campbell and Sigismund de Ivanowski. Naturally enough, the reader looks for first class fare within. But what does he find? He finds a number of short stories so tedious and so empty that it is almost impossible to imagine them getting into the magazines. For instance, "The Wedding Ring," a banal tale of love, with characters which creak in every joint. Again, "Humoresque," a love story even more banal, and without the saving grace of brevity. Again, "The Night Call," a dull piece of mysticism, pointless, unconvincing, New Thoughty. What is the excuse for this sort of stuff? Where is the "art" in it? It is praised as a matter of form by reviewers who remember Dr. Van Dyke's past performances, and many readers tackle it, no doubt, with the feeling that they *must* like it, that to gag at it would be to suffer intellectual disgrace. Let me reassure them. It is bad, bad stuff—with mighty little "art" in it.

SOMETHING PERSONAL

By the Publisher

MAGAZINE making is a fascinating occupation, but it is not all that the man in the street imagines. The average person pictures a magazine publisher or editor as a fortunate being who reads agreeable things all day and prints what he personally likes the best. The average editor, having a sense of humor, would probably tell you that he usually prints what he likes the least, and there would be some truth in the paradox. A publisher or editor who printed only what he liked would be as short-sighted as the advertiser who uses a publication because he enjoys reading it. Both lose sight of the great public with whom rests success or failure. It is a silent public in most part, expressing its approval or disapproval in terms of dollars and cents, but now and again we receive a letter which changes the face of the universe.

I want SMART SET because it is *different*. I can always find just what my mood craves within its pages. And I am never disappointed. The zest, the sparkle, the ginger or flavor—call it what you will—is there. And it is always satisfying.

Encouraging, isn't it? But rather sobering, too, that little paragraph from a banker's letter. It sets such a high standard. Zest, sparkle, ginger—how we strive to get them between our covers!

Imagine yourself an editor, a SMART SET editor, confronted with the eternal problem of make-up. What would be your idea of an interesting table of contents? How would you go about it to give "A Magazine of Cleverness" variety? When you find yourself in a humor for mental gymnastics, please devote a little thought to this matter, and then, if a letter writing impulse fol-

lows, yield to it and tell me what you think. It's your viewpoint—the collective viewpoint of all our readers—that we want to know. If we could understand that, we'd be very near to getting out a magazine that would be unanimously liked.

An editor, or a board of editors, like a legislator, is forced to represent a big constituency. And his job is a more delicate one than that of any legislator, for the legislator is kept pretty clearly informed of the wishes of his constituents while the editor has to go largely by intuition and deduction, with only occasional letters and circulation figures to tell him whether he's on the right road or not.

So you see we want readers to write to us. It's not that we yearn for a lot of complimentary gush to bring unction to our souls; we want to know just what readers really think—for our guidance in producing a still more enjoyable magazine. I'd like particularly to know your opinion of essays. Always fostered by THE SMART SET, this difficult form of literature has latterly been given added space in our pages and many of our readers have written to thank us. Mr. Hereford's "The Paris of the French," in the October number, was especially popular, one enthusiast actually urging us to enter the missionary field and reprint the article in tract form for circulation among the "heathen." The following issue also contained two papers very much out of the ordinary. One man wrote:

I am sitting down to write you a letter of genuine admiration for the November number of THE SMART SET.

It isn't often that I am so greatly pleased

with any number of any magazine. In the first place, I am glad that you have eliminated enough fiction to give place to two of the most charming essays it has been my good fortune to come across. I refer to Arthur Stringer's "Barbarous Woman" and Charles Flandrau's "Boston Changing Her Mind." Here are writers possessing the most delicate humor, plus the keenest of satire, yet minus the trite or indelicate. These qualifications are so rare in writers that I yearn, with a big Y, for more of their contributions. It is such a relief to get away from the half-baked short story with its eternal theme of Love.

Then again I want to express my approval of your cover. Its color scheme is most artistic, its reproduction wonderfully skillful. And oh, joy of joys, it does not contain the banal portrait of a female!

One of the reasons for the wide appeal of *THE SMART SET* is that our material is passed upon by a group composed of very dissimilar units. With an editorial staff both masculine and feminine, married and single, emotional and phlegmatic, we get individual angles galore and a composite viewpoint that satisfies thousands of readers. And now, to give us greater variety, there comes to *THE SMART SET* still another editor, Willard Huntington Wright, who for years has waged war against effeminacy and formalism in American letters. His attitude has been, in a destructive manner, what *THE SMART SET*'s attitude has been in a constructive manner. And we believe that no literary critic in America is more sympathetically qualified to help mold the policies of this magazine, or to give more intelligent critical service to its readers. Like us, Mr. Wright believes in printing the best material that

can be obtained, irrespective of its subject matter. He is not a moralist in the narrow sense of the word, and is free from literary conventionalism. His years of study of American as well as European literature, together with his experience as a newspaper man and a practical writer for magazines, give him the equipment necessary for one of our staff.

A young man barely in his thirties, Mr. Wright was born in Virginia and educated in New York and Harvard University. His life thus far has been entirely devoted to literary matters. At present he has in the press two important books—one, a literary history of the new movement in American letters since 1850; the other, an exposition and compendium of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. His virile poetry is known to the readers of the better magazines. He is essentially modern, and does not believe in the editorial policy which caters to the prejudices, superstitions and sentimentalities of unintelligent readers. He agrees with us that there is an abundance of first class talent in this country which is thwarted by the cautious pieties of the average publisher, and is in complete accord with our aim to make *THE SMART SET* not only a magazine whose primary object is to provide lively entertainment for minds that are not primitive, but also a magazine which will be an outlet for those meritorious contributions which are forced out of the more conventional publications.

John Adams Thayer

P. S.—Why not let us furnish you with all the magazines that you desire for the coming year? This we will do at the lowest combination rate obtainable. For instance, *THE SMART SET* and *Cosmopolitan* \$3.40, instead of subscription price of \$4.50; *THE SMART SET* and *Ainslee's* for \$3.60 instead of \$4.80. You do not have to include *THE SMART SET*. Just mail us the list of magazines that you wish and we will save you the trouble and send you a bill.